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THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way" — however dimly, and lost among the host — as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.
—The Voice of the Silence

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"THUS HAVE I HEARD"—

The great virtue of contentment is not correctly appraised by our civilization. In the name of progress the forces of rivalry and competition are allowed to take possession of our consciousness. Our educational institutions encourage, through the examination system, prize-giving and the like, the development of competition and rivalry. What the boy or the girl may acquire of the spirit of team-work in the sphere of sport greatly weakens in the class-room where the top rank is the coveted position. The seed of discontent is placed in the heart of the boy, who carries it forward into the field of business and waters it to growth in the strength of rivalry; the girl similarly fosters the sprout of competitiveness in the atmosphere of home, club and society; even the realm of social service is not free from the debasing power of competition and rivalry.

People sometimes fool themselves or allow themselves to be fooled by calling this lethal force "divine discontent." The ordinary discontent, almost universally present, has nothing of divinity in it. Grumbling and grouching, lamenting and bemoaning are marks of a discontent, not divine but pertaining to the sub-human nature, the animal which almost every person carries within his consciousness.

Divine discontent shows itself in silent, intelligent resignation. This resignation has no trace of fatalism or kismet; on the contrary, it is positive and active, and spurs the individual to clear his environment of the fleas and ants and mosquitoes of petty and small weaknesses, or of the ferocious tigers and angry bulls of pronounced vices. And this is done in silence and with a sense of humour. True resignation always has within it the silence of knowledge and understanding; this silence is not that of the frustrated man who is morose. Similarly, true resignation evinces a sense of humour —that vital virtue which has insight into the imbalance, the disproportion of what the ancient psychologists named the four humours.

Hilarity and loud laughter do not always bespeak a sense of humour.

This higher or divine resignation carries with it the really divine discontent. This inner, dual, divine power does not produce complaints of the environment with which man has to contend, nor even of his own bodily or mental limitations. The man who has aroused this twofold, divine force recognizes the truth of ancient psychology that his outer environment, be it hut or palace, his standard of living, whether he eats tasty viands or simple food—are but reflections of his inner and psychological environment. He primarily works with his mind with its knowledge and ignorance, its breadth of vision and depth of insight; his emotions of fear and enmity, of egotism and vanity, or of love, generosity and harmony; and the energy to persevere in the search for Self-Knowledge which is the progeny of righteous acts.

Men and women complain of the street and the town in which they live, ignoring the great truth that the street of untidy thoughts and the town of the mean heart are causal. The heat and cold felt by the human body (and who is there who does not complain about the weather?) is a reflection of the likes and dislikes harboured in the brain and allowed to run their course in the blood stream, and of the ambition for wealth and fame and power which becomes the very energy or *prana* valued as self and soul. Each one of us has the inner environment of thoughts and feelings which manufacture words and deeds. This inner environment evaluates, very falsely indeed, our outer environment. Our standard of living is not really dependent on minted gold and silver coins or on paper money, but on the gold of Energy and the silver of Patience, on Harmony of the mind and the Height of the heart.

In the light of the Wisdom of the *Rishi* or Sage-Seer, of the singing thoughts of the Silent One, the *Muni*, how very abject and petty is the "philosophy" that millions of mortals hug to their breasts. Such live in fear and compete in stealth, pretend to be good and succeed in tarnishing and debasing their own consciousness and the beautiful and bountiful Nature which surrounds them. Within us is the Land of Content; labouring thereon we shall reap a harvest undreamt of by worldly "planners" who are almost wholly concerned with schemes and dreams of mere economic progress.

SHRAVAKA

RELIGION IN A SECULAR STATE

[**Prof. A. R. Wadia** dispassionately surveys the condition of religious life and work in modern India, which has been constitutionally declared a secular state. The days of organized religious creeds with their fanaticism and intolerance, ignorance and superstition, are nearly done. More and more people seek the way of virtue and altruism, and some understanding of the meaning and purpose enshrined in the universe. A large number have accepted the principle of Universal Brotherhood and are seeking a rational basis for its practice in personal, national and international life.—ED.]

There is a general feeling in India against Pakistan declaring itself an Islamic state, for this definitely implies that the State of Pakistan looks upon Islam as the only true religion, and there is a distinct risk that at some time religious fanaticism may flare up or at least that the different religions in the State may be tempted to look at one another with suspicious eyes. I myself did not share in this suspicion till one day I was told by a Muslim from Pakistan that India was an irreligious country as her constitution had declared her a secular state. In view of this feeling, it would be worth while discussing briefly the relation of a secular state to religion.

A secular state is essentially a state that does not identify itself with any one religion or religious sect. It takes up a neutral attitude. On the other hand, a so-called religious state, by identifying itself with a particular religion or a particular church, makes itself responsible for the upkeep of all buildings belonging to the established church and for the personnel engaged in its work. The Church of England is an outstanding example of an established church. The King or Queen of England is the head of the Church of England and administers the policy of the Church with the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of England. There was a time in the past when it was intolerant of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Jews, but today things are different: the historic spirit of English tolerance has asserted itself and no political or educational disability attaches to any religion. In most European countries today religion has been dissociated from the State, even in France and Italy in spite of their historic associations with the Roman Church. With the growth of political consciousness in the peoples of different states religion has been disestablished, but thereby religion has gained its independence of political leading strings, and that is a lesson that Pakistan may yet have to learn.

On the whole religion has played so important a part in human history that there may be something

to be said for an established church, provided all the people of a state owe allegiance only to one church. For example, this was possible in Western Europe in the days when the authority of the Pope was absolute in all religious matters. But the Reformation that Luther introduced made it impossible for all the people of a state to be united in their religion. There came into being Catholic countries with pockets of Protestants and Protestant countries with pockets of Catholics. With religious fanaticism at its height, intolerance was the order of the day, often accompanied by cruelty, which lends justification to Swift's caustic remark: "We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love, one another." On the whole the history of religion in Europe goes to show an absence of toleration on the part of the dominant religion or sect. With the growth of the democratic spirit and the acceptance of the right of every individual to practise his religion as he likes, subject to the usual condition that he exercises his right without interfering with the rights of others, it has come to be an accepted principle of modern states that they should not be identified with any particular religion or sect.

India, nurtured upon the principles of Western democracy for a hundred years and more, has rejected the principle of monarchy and accepted the republican pattern for her government. It stands to reason, that following the usual pattern of the modern democratic state, India should have categorically declared that she would be a secular state.

Superficially it might appear that with the establishment of Pakistan as a Muslim state India could have claimed to be a Hindu state, and that is the main plank of Hindu-Mahasabha politics. But the Indian National Congress from the very beginning was working under the banner of secular politics with *all* communities. This trend continued even when Mahatma Gandhi took up the leadership of the Congress, in spite of the fact that he claimed to be intensely religious. But he was not an orthodox Hindu. He claimed his Hinduism to be a universal synthesis of all religions and that is why Christian and Muslim hymns had a place at his daily prayer-meetings.

Even assuming that India could ignore the existence of millions of Muslims still in India, Hindus are hardly in a position to declare India a Hindu state in the religious sense of the term. There are the Buddhists, the Jains, the Sikhs and the Lingayats, all of them adherents of creeds quite different from orthodox Hinduism. In fact, nobody has been able to define Hinduism itself with any success, and it is beginning to be admitted that nobody will be.

Even among the orthodox Hindus

there are different sects traditionally opposed to each other: the Advaitins, the Visistadvaitins, and the Dvaitins. During the last hundred years new reforming sects have come into existence, beginning with the Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Rammohan Roy. It accepted the Upanishads, but rejected caste and idol worship. Later there came into being the virile movement of the Arya Samaj, started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. His cry was "Back to the Vedas!" and he too repudiated caste and idol worship.

So, if India had declared herself a religious Hindu state, which brand of Hinduism would she have taken for an established Hindu Church? Needless to say, any such attempt would only have engendered a great tussle among the Hindus themselves and in the name of religion there would have been endless bickerings as to which Hindu sect should predominate. It would have needlessly created a panic among the non-Hindus, and the numerically superior Hindus would have made it a convenient excuse to keep non-Hindus out of political offices and government service generally. This would have been a sad betrayal of the non-Hindus who fought for political freedom side by side with the Hindus and a grievous betrayal of the whole life and message of Gandhiji.

So, whether from the standpoint of democratic principles or from the standpoint of the inherent inability of Hinduism to define itself, it was political wisdom to declare India a secular state. From the religious standpoint too this was quite justifiable. Far from being irreligious, as alleged by some Pakistanis, India showed herself to be truly religious. Unlike Russia in the early days of her Soviet government, India has not banned religion. On the contrary she has gathered within her bosom all the diverse religions of the world and guaranteed them perfect security, including even the right to propagate their creeds. It would be quite unjustifiable to suggest that the secularity of the Indian State implies any irreligion on the part of her leaders. There is the classic example of Gandhiji. If he were alive today he would have kept alive the flame of religion as he did all his life. Dr. Rajendra Prasad is admittedly a very religious man, leaning towards orthodoxy. Dr. Radhakrishnan has in a number of his books and from numerous platforms declared the supremacy of religion in life, and the rank and file of Indians still continue to be highly religious, steeped in their traditional modes of worship.

Russia affords an excellent example of the vitality of religion. Karl Marx struck the note of modern revolt against religion when he branded it in his classic phrase as "the opium of the people." Lenin made full use of his opportunities when he succeeded in ousting Kerensky and in laying the foundations of

Soviet government in Russia. He banned religion and converted churches into museums or other places of public utility. It is questionable whether he ever persecuted the clergy except in so far as they may have worked against the Soviet regime. But he did better than persecute them. He so ridiculed them in words and posters that he seemed to sap the old loyalty of the people to the Church. The Soviet State of Lenin was definitely irreligious, though secular.

Now before the Russian Revolution the Russians were reputed to be Christians orthodox even to the extent of being superstitious. It would have been an inexplicable miracle if the people had given up their religion overnight. One may safely conclude that the orthodox continued their religion in the safety of their homes or in the sanctuary of their hearts, where Lenin's writ could not have run. That the people had not given up their religion became clear when, in the hour of their triumph and of their victory over the forces of Hitler, the Russians came out in their millions and under the leadership of their priests held many mass meetings to praise and thank God and Christ and Stalin. Surely such a phenomenon could not have taken place overnight, and the conclusion becomes evident that the Russians had continued in their religious beliefs. It would have been stupid of Stalin if he had forbidden these religious meetings when they were held to share in his joy and in his triumph. He allowed them and thereby lifted the official ban against religion. But his action took away the irreligious character of the Russian State and made it secular in the usual democratic sense of the term. And this position still continues. Thus also ended an interesting venture to do away with religion altogether. But religion, like the phœnix, can survive many deaths and many upheavals.

Any state attempting to have an established religion may today be looked upon as anachronistic and not truly democratic or truly religious. Pakistan has already experienced the effects of being an Islamic state. It has made aliens of some millions of Hindus who still cling to their homes in East Bengal as they can look forward to nothing but being helots. Worse still, Muslim fanaticism has begun to turn even against fellow Muslims like the influential and highly educated Ahmediyas. Religious persecution and fanaticism savour of mediævalism and are thoroughly irreconcilable with democracy.

On both logical and historical grounds we would be justified in asserting that a secular state certainly does not imply irreligiousness but only implies neutrality in matters religious, a desire to accept all religions and the right of the individual to accept any of them. At the higher level, as in the cases of

Gandhiji and Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Radhakrishnan, secularity implies the right of religion to have its play above the din and dust of politics. Since it is impossible to prove any one religion the best of all and, more important, since the forcing of any religion upon people is intrinsically and unconditionally an evil, the height and depth of wisdom lies in recognizing the right of all religions to exist and even to propagate themselves by peaceful and constitutional means. In this perspective a secular state may be looked upon not as an irreligious but as a highly religious state.

A. R. WADIA

DISCIPLINE AND CONVERSION

At the Fourth Annual Meeting in Delhi on September 11th and 12th, the Fellowship of Friends of Truth, Wardha, passed two excellent resolutions that show it has rightly grasped two of the sternest problems of India today, and it deserves the thanks of all who wish India well.

The first, on conversion, reaffirms the important truth that conversion is an inner, and usually a continuing, process. People should certainly be free to change their outer religion if they think that likely to help the inner process; but "the uprooting of individuals and groups from their ancestral traditions often has disastrous consequences." To seek to convert people for the sake of a creed's numerical strength, and especially to use coercion or material inducements to this end, is a sacrilege, due to our wrong attitude to religion. If we had the right attitude of tolerance and respect, we would seek true conversion for ourselves by purification from within.

Our plea [says the resolution] is for a new reverence for all religions, and for the opening of windows all round, so that the light from each may shine upon all, helping man to a complete understanding of the Truth within and guiding us all together to a fuller realization of the Life Abundant.

The second resolution draws attention to the sophistries with which the alarming growth of militarism in India is defended. Military training, it is claimed, gives youth much-needed training, discipline and patriotism. But, the resolution points out, it gives all these in the context of modern warfare, which can hardly inculcate the values of Truth and Love. Constructive alternatives, such as training through the Shanti Sena or for village service, are available. "True defence lies in the building up of Truth and Love amongst the people, and not in the accumulation of armaments or training in the use of weapons of destruction," says the resolution which hopes that Gandhiji's India will lead the world in acting upon this truth.

The subjects of these two resolutions seem to be closely inter-related when examined in the light of the psychology of the human individual. Real conversion accompanies real self-discipline. Discipline of the carnal man by the divinity within produces true conversion. Without self-discipline there can be no real conversion.

THE MUTINY OF THE MIND

[**Mr. Roy Bridger**, a champion of the "Back to the Land" Movement in Britain, has proved his faith in his conviction by forsaking business for life on land reclaimed by his own efforts to a state of productivity. He contributed to our last volume several persuasive arguments for a more natural way of life. For argument's sake, no doubt, he understates in this essay the power and responsibility of thought, but is it not certain that a more widespread regard for "life's 'setting,'" a more general and intimate partnership with Nature in producing the necessities of life, would help men to regain the "earthly equilibrium" and live in peace?—ED.]

In his recent biography of Mussolini, the blacksmith's son who became the head of a nation, Paolo Monelli has pictured a ridiculous figure seemingly with the least qualifications for high office. The would-be emperor who is said to have worn spats to conceal the shabby shoes he was too mean to replace lacked the humility which would have made him Chaplinesque. Cut out, Monelli seems to think, for slapstick, he turned instead to politics and chose the tyrant's road to fame.

He was not the only one. If you engaged a man to paint your house, and instead of getting on with his work he insisted on raving the place down with all manner of pointless arguments and shreds of discarded opinions about everything under the sun, you would give him the sack and that would be the finish of him. But, because Hitler became head of a nation in the mood to listen to him, he was able to plunge the world into war.

It is at present too early to place the monolithic Stalin. The machinery he set in motion has not yet come to a standstill; and the biggest blunders are sometimes partly retrieved by the turn of events. We can make a start, however, by saying that Stalin was a man, and not a god. It is not much, but it is rather ominous.

In the glare of democratic publicity the weaknesses of America's leaders could hardly hope to go unnoticed. Roosevelt, in his bluff way, was capable of quite a number of schoolboy "howlers." President Truman never set himself up as anything but a plain man. A plain man controlling the destinies of other plain men is common throughout history. But what if such be called upon to control the destinies of "gods"?

One of the most alarming features of the situation today is the appearance in the world of a race of "gods." The weapons of war are now "godlike" in their perfection. They possess fabulous explosive

power, and their range and speed are immense. The only fitting controllers of such marvels would be men who were made also on the pattern of perfection. We should then have only to select a target—Peace, let us say—to be guided irresistibly towards it. Unfortunately we have only men of various degrees of plainness, small-scale figures with third-class travel outfits, doing their best to cover up the holes in their arguments with oratorical spats. East, west, north and south—there is no one to be seen able to handle the "gods of war."

The gods of Norse mythology were well trained in bloodshed, but the casualties in the daily tournaments in Valhalla were miraculously restored at night, their wounds healed and their lives in front of them as before. Today we possess weapons which would not be out of place in Valhalla but, lacking the magic gift of renewal, we are not the divinities to be using them. The awful finality of the atom bomb, the use of which should be reserved for the supreme decision of god-like beings who have weighed every consideration, is at the disposal of ranting politicians and old-fashioned militarists, men whose ideas veer about from one day to another, no more rooted than thistledown.

If those observers are correct who relate the shift in balance between East and West since Yalta to Roosevelt's misjudgments (it is now generally accepted that distrust of British imperialism led him to concede much to the Russians), there appears little immediate prospect of stability in a world dominated by political decisions. Nothing could be more infinitely nebulous a contribution to atomic planning than mere political opinions. They are so insubstantial that people are blown between extremes even on the same day: deciding in the morning that the only possible course is total disarmament, yet swept by panic headlines in the evening papers into calling for unprecedented defence expenditures.

Since the weakest element in our efforts to solve the problem appears to be that treacherous, unpredictable abstraction called "thought," it is at this point that the greatest pressure should be exerted. But it is futile to bombard the heads of states with pamphlets. Peace will not be attained by two or three individuals' meeting, however well versed they may be in the latest views. It is not the process of thinking which is at fault, but the almost universal habit of thinking politically; and, although the politician is of course more deeply committed than most, the man in the street is badly affected too. If it applied to two tiny nations of about a dozen individuals apiece, facing one another, the

picture of two opposing "sides" would, most likely, be quite accurate. But when each "side" is several hundred million strong, with all ranks fretting themselves to distraction with a medley of theories and fancies, there is ample margin for those particular shades of opinion which occupy themselves with passing on top secrets. There appears to be a possibility of atom bombs becoming as common as bicycles!

In Beethoven's opera, *Fidelio*, there is a sombre scene which depicts a man languishing in a prison dungeon. There seems to be no hope—he is imprisoned for life. The music swirls gloomily, rising to notes of anguish and torment. Suddenly, however, so far away that it might be the wishful product of imagination, a trumpet call is heard—a suggestion of reprieve, a mere breath. A momentary note of promise lights up the music, only to fade and disappear. But again the trumpet call is heard, this time right outside the prison, ringing, unmistakable, releasing a no longer controllable crescendo of fervour for freedom and new life.

Today, with two-thirds of its people condemned (by an average weekly income of a little more than ten shillings) to chronic undernourishment and an expectation of life not exceeding 40 years, the world is threatened with complete devastation by the very agency through which it had been hoping to advance: science. If at times there appears to be no hope, no prospect of release from the dungeon, the impression derives considerably from the uniform inability of the new power groups to realize that the old ideas of security through military strength are played out. Nationalism is a concept, not a portion of reality. A nation is merely a thought in the minds of members of one of the highest species of mammals.

Yet the man in the street, who is torn between conflicting loyalties, "is in the greatest of difficulties when called upon to represent his country." It takes a lot of mental gymnastics to think that the United Nations represents the man in the street. And what can the man in the street claim to be a representative of? He belongs to a group which has attempted to escape the complete responsibilities incumbent upon its species. If man were a sedentary brain radiating ideas, his bond with the soil might be broken with impunity. But unfortunately his other bodily activities have remained at the Piltdown stage, so the man in the street is by no means the common man, who is more precisely the man in the field, the man who has remembered that thinking is a stage in activity which is dependent upon various previous

stages such as growing food and harvesting it.

Although the peasant is the true representative of mankind, he is of all types the least represented, one reason being that he is not interested in ideas. In a world spinning with the head-on clash of ideas, he pursues his life without bothering much about them. This is not to say that his brain does not work as competently as anyone else's, but that he simply cannot afford time for abstractions. Conscious that he and his family would starve if he were to spend his time thinking about Existentialism, the future of the novel, charters of liberty and similar intellectual matters, he possesses in abundance what the brain behind the test-tube appears to have dispensed with altogether—regard for the "setting" or the life around us. The "disinterested devotion to research" with which the scientist seals his work off from the everyday activities of ordinary folk has led to the discovery of the atom bomb, a device for which no cultivator in the world could find a use.

It would be impossible for those with a regard for life's "setting" to entertain explosive thoughts towards it. It would have been useless to offer D. H. Lawrence an important executive post on the Woomera rocket range project on the strength of his having captured the strange fascination of Australia's empty "Dead Heart" so successfully in his book, *Kangaroo*. Seldom has regard for the "setting" been expressed so powerfully as when Rachel Carson, in her book, *The Sea Around Us*, found the words to match the elemental forces which have produced man's environment with those long, majestic sentences coming in like great rollers on a Pacific coast:—

> I see always the steady, unremitting, downward drift of materials from above, flake upon flake, layer upon layer—a drift that has continued for hundreds of millions of years, that will go on as long as there are seas and continents.

But this reverent contemplation of the accumulation of sediments would hardly be likely to be extended to the downward drift of chunks of the Polynesian Islands scheduled to be blown to bits by a group of thought-ridden mutineers.

Turkey is now said to be entering the atomic race, which means that ideas on these lines have entered the minds of a group of mutineers residing in a built-up area. In order that life may be maintained while these thoughts are being entertained, food is placed regularly before the individuals concerned.

How often it is remarked about some foreign diplomat: "He looks just like one of us." Of course—because that's what he is. He wears a nicely tailored suit, is never without a collar and tie and, were ne handed a spade, might stand about

awkwardly just like any other international politician. He is one of the head men, nourished physically by processed and refined foods and mentally by the produce of the myriad rattling printing presses, some of which are turning whole forests into oceans of trash. These machines will have served up to him millions of words on the "international situation," possibly written by political experts, business men, or so-called reliable sources and informed circles, and maybe not a word of it worth reading.

"I think, therefore I am"—it might have been better for everybody if someone had thrust a spade into the hands of Descartes; we might then have been told: "I plough, therefore I eat, and at the end of the day I shall think about what I'm going to do tomorrow." But the original peasantry survives only as a vestige. The old roots have been cut, to be replaced by an artificial pipe-line which is now the only link between the source of life and the intellectual stratosphere. The present-day servants of the food-producing system, geared to the machines which have been thrust upon them, and occupied with distributing the chemicals which are industrialism's contribution to the cycle of return, are more interested in the possibilities of seeing life at second-hand, *via* the cinema and television, than in promoting a rural revival. The reservoir of regard for our setting is dangerously low; but it is becoming apparent that to qualify for the Valhalla of earthly equilibrium entails very great changes, not along the line usually considered as progress, but back towards the soil and the roots.

ROY BRIDGER

Why, when God's earth is so wide, have you fallen asleep in a prison?
Avoid entangled thoughts that you may see the explanation of Paradise.
Refrain from speaking that you may win speech hereafter.
Abandon life and the world, that you may behold the life of the world.

—JALALU'D-DIN RUMI (*Shamsi Tabriz*)

"THE BREWER'S BIG HORSES"

[Fear of war and bombs has become an unnatural experience and **Miss Elizabeth Cross** (who needs no introduction to our readers) offers in this short article a sure remedy — as old as death itself. The *Gita* recommends "a meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness and error"—all interrelated. The great Buddha has said (*Dhammapada*, 146-148):—

> Why this laughter, why this jubilation, when this world is burning, burning? Shrouded in darkness why do you not seek for light? Behold this painted image, this body full of sores, stuck together, sickly, and full of many thoughts devoid of permanence and stability. This body is wearing out; it is a nest of diseases; it is frail. This heap of corruption is breaking to pieces. Life ends in death.

Logical reflection on the death of the body leads to the recognition of the immortal Soul, and a conviction of the ancient truth frees us from fear and hatred and brings us a sense of security.—ED.]

A very long time ago—even before I was a little girl—there was a serious need for Temperance work in England. Life was hard and drink was cheap, so very often fathers stayed far too long in the pub and much social misery resulted. The Temperance workers used all sorts of means, signing pledges, wearing blue ribbons, teaching songs, to popularize their campaign. In fact they worked so hard that occasionally they became the victims of their own fears, and sometimes lost adherents through over-exaggeration.

One of the songs I remember being mocked was that which declaimed: "The Brewer's big horses, they can't frighten me!"—this being, in the original, because Father had Signed the Pledge, but it was finally parodied into quite another theme, and the Brewer's big horses merely brought fizzy lemonade and were as tame as tame.

Isn't it about time we began to say the same thing about the atom bomb? Personally I am sick and tired of atom bombs and Communists; but of the two I think the bomb bores me most. If by being scared to death I could do the slightest bit of good to anyone then I would willingly sit down and tremble, so do not imagine my calm is due to lack of sympathy with the innocents of the human race. But I really don't think my worrying will do anything for anyone, except perhaps make me more disagreeable and so cause further unhappiness all round. If I were really convinced that everyone's hope of a future were much more slender than ever before, I doubt if I would have bought those 12 new rose trees last Autumn. But I took a chance and now they are blossoming joyfully in the garden, decorating

the sitting room, and their spent petals going into a jar of scented potpourri.

It may very well be true that the atom bomb can kill more people in a shorter time than has ever been done before. After all, Great Britain and the U.S.A. are in the position of having proved it — and I can't say I'm very proud. I still don't think, however, that the end of the world is at hand, or if it is the end of the sort of world we have known I still don't think it matters so much. Civilizations have risen and fallen in history before, and it may well be that we are on such very wrong lines that it is time we handed over to the animals and let them have a go at things.

To be somewhat cynical, however, I don't believe that most people in the Western world are so much worried about the end of true civilization. What I think is that they are getting fussed about war in general and the bomb on their town in particular. This general atmosphere of fear is being disseminated by many writers who would do better to sit down and think more clearly before they throw around such grand phrases as "Man is facing disaster..." or "This Atomic Age challenges mankind..." Just that a tragedy happens to a lot of people at once doesn't make it any more tragic for the individual — sometimes the contrary. If you do happen to be blown to pieces with all your friends and relations you are certainly saved a great deal of worry and bother. This is not just a frivolous thought; it is meant quite seriously, because I consider it absolutely wrong reasoning to presume that one hundred simultaneous deaths are, automatically, several hundred times more sorrowful or tragic than one hundred separate and individual deaths.

The whole mistaken attitude, which is partly a cause of this exaggerated fear of the atomic bomb, is taken because governments and society in general have gradually forgotten the individual in favour of the mass. A whole host of hideous new words are used to denote people: "personnel," "labour," "consumers," and so on. They hide little John and Mary and Mrs. Brown and old Grandpa Jones. That is why it takes something that will kill several thousand people at a time to make any government sit up and take notice. Yet the death or disablement of any individual is important, to himself and to his friends, and finally to the world at large. "...never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee."

Let us get back our respect for the individual; then we shall be able to take proper and right action. If we are going to sit down and let ourselves be scared by every headline about the bomb or guided missiles or any other scientific nonsense the chaps may think up, we shan't have a proper attitude to

the small girl waiting to cross the road in front of our car. We are not helpless in the world: we can preserve life, but in our own individual way. Not so much by signing pledges or petitions but by keeping our eyes open and our brakes in good order if we are motorists, and by being ready to escort children and old people across the road if we are pedestrians. Not very exciting or very "Atom-Age" perhaps, but practical and honest. What is more, if you have ever had the terrible task of breaking the news to parents that their child has been killed on the way to school ("The driver didn't see her in time..."), you know that the sorrow would have been no more acute had the missile been from the air.

The atom bomb may still do some good if it can but make us acknowledge our mortality. "Look your last on all things lovely, every hour..." We don't do this often, if at all. The poets have always begged us to value fleeting beauty, Housman in particular, with his reminder of how short a time we have to watch the cherry tree in bloom, and Shakespeare with his

> Golden lads and girls all must,
> As chimney-sweepers, come to dust

—to say nothing of Jesus's teaching that we must lay up for ourselves "treasures in heaven" because then our hearts need not be with our treasures on earth. But let us also be realistic and admit that, in certain circumstances, a wasp's sting may be the weapon that sets us to explore that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." Let us keep in mind that, truly, any minute may be our last in this world, and so let us open our eyes to appreciate the beautiful and the good, and let us guard our lips against hurtful speech. In the same way we may gain much patience and kindness if we realize the mortality of others. How many people spend time in regretting kind deeds not done, loving words unsaid, when some loved person has gone!

How cowardly it is to forget our mortality! And how cramping! It is foolish to think, ever, that you have plenty of time, because no time could ever be enough to see and experience all the wonders there are in even a small plot of ground. Why, just now when I bent to pick up a peg fallen from the washing, I saw a bumblebee going carefully down a small hole to her underground home, and nearby an ant carrying another on his back—enough life there to occupy my study for weeks, but I had better do the ironing first.

Don't let the big bomb frighten you, any more than the "Brewer's big horses." Also, do not be shocked or disgusted by my practical, individual attitude. Many people are, such as an old-fashioned friend who exclaimed at the extravagance of flowers I brought home to my mother one winter's evening.

"Oh, she brings me flowers every week," my mother said, burying her nose in the bunch.

"She likes them better than wreaths on her coffin," I explained. The friend was horrified, but Mother understood.

ELIZABETH CROSS

SONGS OF THE BAULS

To whom do you pay homage, O my heart?
All that is eternal, all that is evanescent is your guru.

Your gurus are numberless

Your bridal is your guru, your guru is the agony of death.

The pain in your heart is your guru, and that which makes you weep.

To whom should you pay homage, O my heart?

Shrimati Lila Ray quotes this verse in her instructive essay, "The Bird of Life," in *Indo-Asian Culture* for July 1954, describing the attitudes and beliefs of the Bauls, a sect of mystical humanists in Bengal, drawn largely, though not entirely, from the illiterate classes.

The other principles of this mystical sect are equally worthy of contemplation. All its followers have renounced the formal religion of their birth. Lalon Fakir, for instance, born a Hindu, yet adopted "Fakir" as part of his name and sang in one of his songs of "Israfil's horn."

To a Baul, "What is true is moral, irrespective of codes." He believes that through love a direct knowledge of reality can be attained that needs no rationalization. There is the struggle, certainly, between the vitality of physical existence and the individual's longing for the shore of an existence other than physical, where complexities are resolved into "certainty and stability." But this universal life is, as the Baul songs say, within, "behind lock upon lock," the "Man-of-the-Heart," the "master in this house" of the human constitution. To seek it, the Baul does not reject the body. He uses it as "the instrument of supreme perception" and of the expression of the divinity immanent in all visible splendour. And he accepts human love eagerly and reverently, as a bridge to the experience of divine love.

Lest their mystic acceptance of the body be abused to justify self-indulgence, the Bauls usually keep this part of their belief esoteric.

The Bauls mostly express themselves in song, even in answering questions. It is from an answer sung to the question why this is so, that Shrimati Ray has taken her title:—

When the bird of life speaks
Be quiet and listen....

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF EDUCATION

[In our issue of April 1954 **Dr. S. M. Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.,** wrote on the importance in individual life of "Faith in the Self" (p. 170). In this essay he makes the most important single application of the principle there established—to educational methods. He has offered in effect a metaphysical basis for such modern educational reforms as seek to draw understanding from within the child rather than instil ideas into its mind, and reminded us of the truths Socrates propounded and practised in this respect. Brilliant thinkers of the West too have been as severe in their judgment upon the educational evils rooted in creedalism.

We hope especially that his remarks upon the rivalry constantly encouraged in our schools will be taken to heart by some educators at least. It is one of the more dismaying examples of modern blindness that rivalry should ever be supposed "healthy."—ED.]

"Of *Atma* this life is born" (*Prashnopanishad,* iii. 3). Man is not his body, or his senses or even his mind. These are his vestures, subject to change, decay and death, whereas the real man is immortal, is ever abiding, never-ending, "eternal, unborn, perpetual and ancient."

The Hindus from time immemorial have taught that life is education. Death may transfer us to a higher class in the School of Earth-Life. In any case we shall have to pass on from class to class and from school to college. And, while we are continuing our education, two processes will be carried on in our souls—two processes which are really one—the awakening of consciousness in the hidden depths of our being, and the transcendence of self. The immanent God, the innermost core of Reality, is at the heart of each. To awaken consciousness in deeper and still deeper strata of our being is the task that awaits us in this and future lives.

The life of self-transcendence leads to Self-illumination. Lives of service prepare us for the Great Service. The essence of worship is the dedication of the heart to the One Self. The temple of God is everywhere. The worthiest offering that we can lay on the Altar is service. And the medium of communion with God is selfless love.

This, in short, is the Hindu conception of Deity as different from the Semitic religions, which mostly believe in an extra-cosmic God who rules the world as He wills. He is quite different from human beings, whom He is said to have created.

It seems to me that, if the civilized people of the world can revise their conception of Godhead and can bring themselves to believe

in the immanence of God, they will be in a position to have fuller and deeper sympathy with all human beings, to love all and to live in the lives of others. This sound conception of life should be inculcated in the minds of little children in an easy form from their early years. Therefore it is essential that this ideal should be borne in mind while dealing with them at every stage. On this ideal we could build a new education which would serve as a sound foundation for all time to come, and which would enable us to awaken and develop our inner and deeper consciousness, at present veiled from us because of our own ignorance.

This ideal demands that we dedicate ourselves to the service of our common humanity, and not of ourselves only. We must also make it possible for our children to follow the bent of their real nature and dedicate themselves in their turn. If the grown man finds it hard to enter the Kingdom of God, the reason is that he was not allowed to enter it while he was still a child.

Devotion to the universal ideal is, of inner necessity, disinterested. If there is any taint of self-interest in our service, we may be sure that we are not rendering it to the Infinite Whole. We cannot serve God *and* Mammon. Nor can we serve God *and* self. Absolutely disinterested service is the true ideal, an end which we must never cease to pursue. It is in order to learn the lesson of disinterested devotion that we are living our lives on earth; and children cannot begin to learn the lesson at too tender an age.

The world is sick of a grave malady, and it is now passing through a dangerous crisis. The symptoms are that the old ideals are outworn, that the old restraints have lost their power, that a flood of selfish desires and lawless passions has been let loose and that we are nearer to moral anarchy than we have been for many centuries. For so desperate a disorder there is but one remedy—a new ideal or hierarchy of ideals, a radical change in the inner man. Apart from such a change, our attempts at reform are so much patchwork, and reconstruction schemes are the idlest of dreams. We may alleviate symptoms. We cannot cure the disease.

But to make such a change—the change of being "born again" when one has reached adult life—is a task of almost superhuman difficulty. Genuine "conversion"—the sudden transformation of the inner man—is a very rare phenomenon. It presupposes an exceptional combination of circumstances, and not always is a sudden, radical change a healthy one. It is sometimes hysterical or otherwise morbid. The new life does not always endure, the violent change being sometimes followed by an equally violent reaction. If a change in the inner man is to be permanent and effective, it must be

evolutionary rather than revolutionary, the outcome of a secret process of growth rather than a sudden reversal of the current of one's being. In other words, it should, ideally, begin in the nursery and be carried on through childhood and adolescence into adult life.

The cult of the extra-cosmic God has been the evil genius of education in Christendom. The parent and the schoolmaster have played the part of the God whom they worshipped, in the little worlds which they rule. And they have reproduced in the life of the child, and therefore of the man, all the evils which the tyranny of the omnipotent autocrat has wrought in the life of mankind. They have applied to the child—applied, that is, to the growing man—at the time when his growth ought to have been most vigorous, when the sap of his life was rising most strongly, a steady and relentless pressure which has had behind it a heavy weight of ignorance, prejudice and "will to power." The result of this pressure has been, in part to arrest, in part to warp, his growth. Growth, if healthy and harmonious, concentrates in itself all emancipative forces, but the result of the pressure of dogmatic education has been to imprison the child in himself.

As the child, animated by the instinct to live, has passively resisted this deadly pressure, the autocratic controllers of his destiny have tried to overcome his resistance by alternating rewards with punishments, bribes with threats. In doing this they have lowered the whole plane of his effort and activity and also his outlook on life. What bribes and threats have not done in the way of demoralization has been achieved in many cases by forcing the child to compete with his classmates for prizes and other marks of distinction, thus tempting him to regard his comrades as rivals and possible enemies, to pride himself on his petty achievements and to look down on those whom he may have happened to surpass. In other words, the child's elders have fostered his selfishness, his ambition and his vanity.

They have done more than this. They have made the child dependent on themselves for instruction and guidance, and have thus paralyzed his faith in himself. They have weakened his will, partly by trying to break it, partly by giving him no opportunity for the exercise of self-discipline and self-control. They have made him blind, or at least dim of vision, by assuming that he could not see. They have cramped his intellectual, artistic and constructive capacity by wilfully narrowing the field of his development; and, when his tastes and powers have died of inanition, they have taken for granted that they never existed, that he was by nature as stupid and helpless as he was vicious and perverse.

Worse still, they have taught him

to look without instead of within for his ideals, his motives, his standards of value, his tests of reality, his proofs of failure or success. And, as the crowning injury, they have tried to make him religious, not by helping him to discern and follow the "true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," but by requiring him to take part in ceremonial observances which have no meaning for him and by plying him with their own scriptures and creeds.

The whole scheme of his education seems to have been framed for the express purpose of turning him out into the world with few or no interests which can take him away from himself, the victim of arrested or, at best, of one-sided mental and spiritual development, imprisoned in a narrow and conventional morality, dominated by the prejudices of his own social class, absorbed in selfish aims and ambitions, destitute of any sense of human fellowship, a materialist, an individualist, an extravert, asking from life too much of comfort and pleasure, too little of that deeper happiness which is within his grasp if he will but claim it. There are many lessons which his pastors and masters have omitted to teach him. But there is one which they seem to have deliberately prevented him from learning—*the lesson of disinterested devotion, of Self-realization through self-forgetfulness, of losing the world that he may find his soul.*

Yet he was ready to learn that lesson before they took him in hand. *The pioneers in education who have based their schemes on trust in the natural goodness and the all-round capacity of the average child have proved this to the full.* There are schools in England which are ideal social communities—schools in which the children, released from needless pressure, allowed to express themselves freely in many ways, allowed to develop in many directions, have found, in the joy of "unimpeded energy," the sense of oneness with their fellows through partnership in a common life: schools in which material rewards and punishments are unknown, in which honest effort is its own reward, in which the success of each is a matter of rejoicing for all, in which the spirit of comradeship has killed the spirit of competition, in which the whole atmosphere is electric with life and happiness and good-will. At present such schools may be counted on one's fingers; but if the basis of education could be changed they would multiply, and as they multiplied there would be a corresponding change in the basis of our social life.

The cult of the extra-cosmic God, involving as it does a profound distrust of human nature, is, I repeat, the evil genius of education. *Let us now base education on the cult of the immanent God, and on the inexhaustible trust in human nature which is at the heart of that cult.* It

is not for me to suggest how this is to be done. *The immanent God "fulfils himself in many ways"*; and in the sphere of education, if in no other, exclusive devotion to any custom, however "good," will sooner or later "corrupt the world."

The orthodox type of education has been a failure, not only because its aims and ideals have been at fault, but also because of its blind belief in stereotyped methods, which it has forced on the teacher as well as on the child. In this it has been true to its own master principle, for if the immanent God fulfils himself in many ways, the extra-cosmic God reveals himself in only one.

Let the new education be equally true to its master principle, *the principle which is inherent in faith in divine immanence.* At present the new education is a heresy. Let it take care that it never degenerates into orthodoxy. Let it give freedom and responsibility in generous measure to the teacher, and through the teacher to the child. Its confidence will not be misplaced. What matters it if each of a thousand pioneers in education takes a path of his own? If they are all animated by reverence for the indwelling Spirit of God, and therefore for the unfolding nature of the child, they will all arrive, in the fulness of time, at the same goal.

For they will have taught their pupils or, rather, they will have helped them to learn for themselves, the great lesson of disinterested devotion, the great lesson of loyalty to the community—to an ever-widening community—in and through loyalty to one's own higher Self. When this lesson has been widely learnt and practised, the reform of our social life will become something more than a politician's promise or an enthusiast's dream. It is through its action on the child, even more than through its action on the adult, that the cult of the autocrat of the Universe has corrupted man's nature and demoralized his life. The adult is what his upbringing has made him and it is not easy for him to become anything else. But the child may become anything. The Kingdom of Heaven is as open to him as is the prison of self. We have hitherto gone out of our way to drive him into the prison of self. Let us now help him to enrol himself as a citizen of the Kingdom. Then, in the next generation, we shall perhaps have a better and happier world.

M. HAFIZ SYED

I have studied, most reverend Sir, the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, the Atharvaveda as fourth, the epic and mythological poems as fifth Veda, grammar, necrology, arithmetic, divination, chronology, dialectics, politics, theology, the doctrine of prayer, necromancy, the art of war, astronomy, snake-charming, and the fine arts—these things, most reverend Sir, have I studied; therefore am I learned indeed in the scripture but not learned in the Ātman. . . .I am in sorrow—lead me then over, I pray, to the farther shore that lies beyond sorrow.

—Nārada to Sanatkumāra in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (vii, 1)

MARCO POLO IN INDIA

[The famous traveller's 700th birth anniversary is being celebrated. **Mr. H. P. Collins,** at one time Literary Editor of *The Adelphi*, editor-translator of Joubert, and author of *Modern Poetry*, is writing a book on Marco Polo. This article from his pen is topical and interesting.—ED.]

The Iron Curtain of mediæval Islam was far harder to penetrate than that of modern Moscow. For centuries before the Mongol conquests the vast tracts of Asia east of the Pamirs had been legendary territory to Europe. Even the numerous Asiatic converts, Nestorians, Manichees, Jacobites, had lost all living contact with the sources of their beliefs. Marco Polo, who arrived at the court of the Khakhan Kublai nearly 50 years after Chinghis Khan's death, was actually the first European to give an account of the Buddha, and he remains the only eyewitness of the Hindu civilization of Champa, Crivijaya and Java. Otherwise only the recently excavated ruins of that lost civilization survive to tell of the rather mysterious triumph of Hindu over Chinese culture in Southeast Asia—a phase that passed away at the same time as the Mongol empire itself, and as completely.

But the one traveller to whom the wonders of mediæval Asia were revealed was the most prosaic of observers. It was a self-satisfied, pertinacious and grasping shopkeeper, to whom the Queen of the Adriatic gave birth 700 years ago, one who was no scribe and had no formed language in which to tell a story orally, though he was enough of a linguist to patter four Eastern dialects. His *Travels*, really a geography rather than a travel book, was dictated rapidly in 1298, in a Genoese dungeon, to one Rustichello, a fellow prisoner of war. We have no original text, nor even a copy of the original parchment, and it is only with the discovery in 1932 of the "Zelada" Latin MS. at Toledo that the later half of Polo's account, including India, has taken on the appearance of a fairly consecutive narrative.

Except for the Siberian north, the general outline of Asia was familiar to Europeans, but Islam had long curtained off the vast complex civilizations revealed to Marco Polo. Not that Christianity was incurious, though proselytizing zeal was greater than intellectual curiosity. Long-standing Papal curiosity culminated in the arrival of the friar John of Pian of Carpini at the Mongol capital of Karakorum under the Khakhan Cui in 1247; and in the 1250's St. Louis of France sent William of Ruysbruck on the same journey. Both survived the rigours of the enterprise with difficulty, and

though they were better equipped narrators than Marco Polo their circumscribed accounts have made little impression. Neither knew the Indias. When the elder Polos on their first journey home left Kublai's court in 1266 it was on the understanding that they were to ask the Pope for a hundred holy men to expound Christianity to the East. The Mongols had invaded Europe half-a-century earlier, and the crafty Kublai was possibly more anxious for military details than religious enlightenment. In 1271 the Polos started back with their nephew and two holy men deputed by Gregory X, the newly elected Pope. A Mongol war broke out in Persia, and the monks soon turned tail, but young Marco was made of sterner stuff. From the moment of his arrival at the magnificent summer palace of Xanadu (Shandu) he became the directing spirit of the trade expedition and the real emissary of the West in the eyes of the sagacious Kublai.

Unlike most great explorers Marco Polo discovered a civilization higher than his own. The pattern revealed to his eager, limited gaze was a long-finished pattern. He was enough of a student or scientist to record fact and suppress his own adventures. His frequent dryness has the excuse of a good motive, and he had an insatiable appetite for the marvels which were no marvels to him. His cautious, methodical attempt to bridge two remote civilizations resulted in his name becoming a byword for liar and his being ironically named *Millioni*. For, like the child before the giraffe, he could not believe his eyes and scarcely knew what was true or untrue. "I did not write half of what I saw," he declared.

His "Indie" is a body with the head missing, but the torso is easily recognizable. Of Oriental religions or cultures he had no conception; but his book is an invaluable (because innocent) testimony to the changeless integrity of the East. "Idolaters" in Cathay or Manji meant Buddhist to Marco Polo and in India it meant Hindu; but the authentic unchanged lineaments are all the evidence the initiated need. He divides India into three: Greater, Less and Middle, by which last he means the explored portion of Africa, not then known as a continent. In the Less he included roughly everything between Bengal and the straits of Malacca. Hindu India proper he visited twice in the service of the Khakhan. It was the age of multiple sovereignty: many of the rulers were still free of the Khakhan, while many paid tribute to him. The essential India was still untouched by Islam or the West. At the time of Polo's first visit about 1286 the Mongols had taken Champa, but Burma was not conquered yet. His mission was probably—though he does not identify them—the one to Ceylon he mentions elsewhere, to acquire

certain sacred relics the Khakhan coveted, of which the chief was the Buddha's tooth. The Commissioner sailed west-southwest from the port of Zaitun to Champa, "a country very wealthy and large, whereof the people are idolaters and have a king and language of their own and send yearly tribute of elephants and aloe-wood to the Khakhan."

He did not comment upon the long Hindu ascendency in Champa, so recently ended, nor the sculptured ivories of the land; but he did remark that its wide forests were the source of ebony chessmen. He sailed on southward, apparently missing Cambodia with the magnificent temples at Angkor, so soon to be lost in the jungle for centuries. Touching at Pulo Condore, he veered westward across the Gulf of Siam and landed near historic Hindu Ligor. Here he found an independent people, secure in the wilds of northern Malaya, who were probably Shans migrating southward from the Mongol dominium. These must have been the future conquerors of Cambodia, the founders of modern Siam. Marco Polo is perhaps the only European venturer to have seen the kingdom of Locac, with its brazils, in the days of the Shans, when its cowries and gold were exported, the gold to be coined for the bulging treasuries of the great Kublai.

Crivijaya was then in the throes of the Javanese encroachments and Singapore was already lost. Marco Polo said little about these historic changes, but he was shocked to find Mohammedanism flourishing in several of the eight kingdoms of "lesser Java" (or Sumatra) where he was marooned for some months. But as these urbanized Moslems had been recently the cannibal sun-worshippers so memorably described by Ludovico Barthema, he counted them no great spiritual loss.

The mission reached "Greater India" by way of Seilan, the home of true Hinayana Buddhism. Here Marco Polo observed that the "wretched and cowardly people" were no warriors but held the richest jewels of the world, and King Sendeman the great ruby even the Khakhan's wealth could not buy. The naked and vegetarian ways of these highly civilized islanders had a strange fascination for the Venetian. Kandy had been for over a century the most important shrine of the Buddhist world, from which had spread the enthusiasm that filled Burma with her matchless pagodas and the realms of the Shans with their unique religious sculptures.

Marco Polo's long account of Sagamoni Borcan is, so far as it goes, singularly faithful. He did not succeed in explaining to Europe that the Buddha had founded a faith that was distinct from Hinduism; but he did in his way grasp the distinction that the Buddha was a man made god and not a god in origin; that his spirit had been *perfected* through reincarnations; and that his images were images of

God and quite distinct from polytheistic images. It is difficult to believe that either Kublai or Marco Polo was deceived by the fragment of elephant's tooth which was afterwards triumphantly displayed in Kambaluk as a sacred relic; but it is interesting to see with what dispassion the literal-minded Venetian sought to disentangle the Christian and pagan legends that had clustered for centuries round the sepulchre of Adam in Ceylon.

Marco seems to have entered the essential Hindustan by voyaging westward to the Kingdom of Maabar or the Coromandel coast. This region of pearls and fish-charmers and vivid fauna afforded the sober European his most memorable experience of a people dominated by religious devotion. Of the beliefs that underlay such unfamiliar fanaticism he comprehended little or nothing; and he was deeply puzzled by the ritual of the temples. The cult suicides moved him almost to eloquence. Nothing could emphasize the gulf between East and West more than this wonderment of a plain man whose mind had not been touched by previous travellers' tales. In Maabar Marco Polo first encountered Brahmins and yogis, and it is notable that the only obvious parallel to European experience afforded him was that of the yogi alchemists, then at the height of their fame. He was far less horrified by pretentiousness than by true asceticism, which he met for the first time among yogis, especially in the province of Lar beyond Maabar "towards sunrising," the home of the brahmins. "And these are so cruel and so treacherous and such perfect idolaters, that I tell you it is devilry."

But the abiding fascination of Marco Polo's India lies in the obvious fidelity of his outward description, not in any tantalizing glimpses of inner understanding. He records the particulars, and after 700 years we see them as unchanged essentials. As we travel northward with the strangely expatriate Commissioner "towards more civilized parts" to Mutfili, and then again southward, and then westward to the pirate-haunted coasts of Melibar and Tana, a sort of miracle occurs. The spectacles of education and experience fall from our eyes, and we see the thronging subcontinent as if we were children born on some other planet.

Once again, seven years later, Marco Polo sailed round the coast of India with a great fleet, conducting a 17-year-old Mongol princess to the court of the Il-Khan of Persia, whose bride she would have been if he had not poisoned himself with the alchemists' potions hopefully imported from Maabar. To this later visit we owe the wonderful account of Burma, conquered by the Khakhan's generals in the battle of the elephants at Vochang. His description of Mien, as he called the land, and especially of Pagan, the

shrine of pure Buddhism, perhaps lingers in the mind beyond anything else in his vast book. The gold and silver roofs, graciously spared by the conquering Kublai, gleam in an eternal sunlight. But the second impression of Southern Asia had not the freshness of the first, and it was far more hurried. It is to the rather impious quest of the Buddha's tooth that the Western world owes its introduction to a wider and more urgent spiritual experience.

H. P. COLLINS

HUMANISTIC STUDIES

Interesting points are made in replies to a questionnaire of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies in connection with a Unesco project investigating practice and possibilities in study, in East and West, of each other's culture.

M. Paul Masson Oursel thinks that the diverse traditional cultures of East and West can furnish the elements of a new common culture, but warns against confusion and over-simplification.

Dr. Arnold Toynbee's best suggestion is in connection with presenting the backgrounds of Oriental civilization to Western students. In this, which we should put before the recent history of East and West that he makes a preliminary, he advocates beginning "with the religious and philosophical classics of the Oriental cultures, not with the literary ones .... Religious and philosophical ideas seem to be much more the common property of Mankind."

M. Jean Bayet, Director de l'Ecole Française de Rome, points out that "thought and sensibility transcend history, even the history of civilization." Before differences are pointed out "youth has to be persuaded of the common capital ... which justifies moral exchanges between men of good will."

M. Alain Daniélou deplores the "incredible lacuna" in Occidental culture represented by ignorance of the East. He thinks that the discovery of the classical art and thought of the East might have an effect on the modern West which would be comparable to that of the discovery of Greek thought upon the mediæval Christian Occident. And he paraphrases Goethe's "He who knows but one language knows none" as "He who knows but one religion cannot estimate its value."

In its reply the Indian Institute of Culture at Bangalore offers several suggestions for acquainting students in East and West with the best in each other's thought. It draws attention, however, to a relevant and basic problem:—

> The proper balancing of technology and the humanities seems to us a world educational problem of the first magnitude.

EX NIHILO NIHIL

[**Mr. Rufus Suter** is an American contributor whose study of Kant under the title, " The Sage of Königsberg, " appeared in our June 1953 issue. He here presents in the guise of thought-provoking fiction reflections growing out of one phase of the thought of that great philosopher of 18th-century Germany.—Ed.]

Peter Schmidt had received a red invitation card from his friend Dr. Li Sheng-wei telling him to come to supper three nights hence. Peter was delighted, for he liked soy-bean curd mixed with fried shrimp, and he knew that the old man would serve it. So on Wednesday evening he rang the doorbell of a rooming house and was admitted by his host. Up a flight of stairs he was ushered into a familiar one-room apartment with a refrigerator and a small gas stove. Even before the door was opened he smelt the pungent fragrance of the frying shrimp. "It is *teen ha mo*" (out of this world), he thought, in the only Cantonese he knew.

Peter could wield chop-sticks expertly. So for a time no word was spoken while he and his host enjoyed several bowls of the delicious concoction. Not until tea drinking began did Dr. Li Sheng-wei find leisure to speak. Then he said abruptly: "You know, of course, that in my youth I spent several years in Germany studying philosophy." Peter had not known, but he remained silent. "We Chinese," the old man continued, "respect Immanuel Kant highly." This was also news to Peter, for hitherto he had imagined that the Chinese respected no philosophers except their own, that is, the First, Second and Third Sages—Confucius, Mencius, and Chu Hsi, respectively. But he still kept quiet because he did not wish to interrupt a line of thought that had taken an unexpected turn.

He was even more astonished when Dr. Li Sheng-wei, instead of droning on interminably about the principles of morality and political science (as the Chinese usually do), launched off into a lively exposition of Kant's teachings about space and time. Peter had enough German in him to feel instinctively that everything Kant said was to be taken seriously. As far back as he could recall he had believed, though vaguely, that space and time were "forms of sensibility," as Kant had taught, and that they were not "things-in-themselves." But now, paradoxically, this Chinese was making the Kantian doctrine clearer to him than it ever had been before. He caught himself listening intently to his venerable host, who had reached the stage of talking about the moon. "The moon," he was saying, "is a sphere, as you would

see, Peter, if you could live long enough to go there. But my point is that everything *spatial* about the moon: its having shape, and its moving through space—all this *spatiality* is generated by our consciousness in the act of observing the moon. Do you get the point?" Then without waiting for an answer: "The same may be said, Peter, of everything *temporal* about the moon: its lasting. This again is your and my consciousness at work, organizing our perceptions of the moon into a neat pattern."

Peter was pleased by his host's grasp of Western science. The moon, obviously, in this discourse, was doing duty as an example. The point was that space and time in their entirety, or as a whole, result from acts of consciousness. In the universe as it really is there is neither time nor space: no permanence, no movements, no succession, no change, no dimensionality, no shape, no divisibility, no separateness. Also no opposites to these: no instantaneousness, no stationariness, no simultaneity, no changelessness, no points, no shapelessness, no indivisibility, no togetherness—for the one set of opposites are as much parts of time and space as the other.

Peter suddenly was vividly aware of the point. Then he walked to the cupboard and looked at a beautiful Ming vase. "Kant," he cogitated, "must be correct. But if it is true that every space-quality and every time-quality is projected into that vase by a deeply ingrained quirk of my consciousness when I look at it, the electrons tracing orbits around the protons that constitute it must lead a very peculiar kind of life. And what about all the history between the instant when that vase was made in Peking four or five centuries ago and this moment? The discovery of Jupiter's satellites, the invention of the steam-engine, the harnessing of electricity, the two world wars, and now the splitting of the atom—these events, too, must have occurred and existed in a quite unintelligible way if time and space are spectacles through which I watch time."

Peter's preoccupation with his own thoughts had been so intense that he was paying no attention to Dr. Li Sheng-wei. Then he happened to notice him and was puzzled by the quizzical expression in his eyes. From his chair at the table the old man moved unsteadily towards the stove to brew some more tea. Seized by what he evidently considered a better idea, he hobbled to Peter, touched him gently on the sleeve and whispered in his ear: "Peter, would you care to know what the universe is like when your spectacles are broken?" Peter was caught too unawares to reply. In the first place he had not spoken

out anything about spectacles. The old man continued: "You know, in my youth, I lived for several years in India, where I studied Yoga. I learned from the Masters how to obtain what I believe may well be complete control of my consciousness—though I am not yet entirely certain, never having made the ultimate test of whether I can render inoperative what Kant called the forms of sensibility. There is naturally the rather embarrassing chance that if I really am able to pass the ultimate test, space and time will collapse altogether—consciousness being, as you know, one. And then, since the phenomenal universe is stretched out over space and time, like a lattice-work, if the lattice-work should vanish, the phenomenal universe would. . . ."

Peter, more to humour his host than from curiosity to learn what would happen if Kant's forms of sensibility were put out of commission, said: "All right! Go ahead!"

He caught again the quizzical expression in the eyes of the venerable Chinese. And that was the last quizzical expression, or indeed the last of anything else that he ever caught sight of, for without fanfare there suddenly was—Nothing. The universe of phenomena went out like a light—not only for Dr. Li Sheng-wei and Peter Schmidt, but also for everybody else: those who lived contemporaneously with Dr. Li and Peter, those who lived before them throughout all past history, and those who would live after them in a future which no longer existed.

RUFUS SUTER

THE PROBLEM OF SEX

Dr. Irene Bastow Hudson's *Sex Problems with Reference to Family Limitation and the Teaching of the Ancient Wisdom* is a tiny pamphlet that dwells on a side of this subject too little considered by modern societies in their wholesale acceptance of contraceptives and artificial birth control. She emphasizes that sex is a creative power, properly used only in the propagation of the race, and that unwholesome effects, both moral and physical, must follow from the abuse of such a power for mere gratification. The true significance of marriage is also brought out: that it is a training of the feelings to altruism.

It is heartening to see one with Dr. Hudson's medical qualifications propound the spiritual view. In analysing the abnormal slavery of modern people to the sex urges she draws upon the profound explanations offered in the esoteric anthropology of Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. We are afraid, however, that she introduces the technical terms and unfamiliar doctrines of Theosophy without sufficiently preparing the ground. This is likely to confuse and turn away the reader who is not already a student of Theosophy. It is to be wished, for this reason, that she could have revised her outspoken essay so as to lead up to the Theosophical doctrines by gentler steps and otherwise improve the arrangement of her material.

R. P. S.

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

MATHILDE DO CANTO*

Nowadays, the "*romans-fleuves*" inundate the literary market. It is rarely that one rereads them, unless to look, amidst the endless details, for some outstanding pages. On the contrary, thin books are reread with renewed pleasure : one discovers what the author discreetly suggests or leaves untold, and one has even the delightful freedom to read between the lines. . . ! Typical recent examples of such books are *La Marche à l'Etoile* by Vercors (author of the famous *Silence de la Mer*) and *Olivia* by Olivia (*nom de plume* of Mrs. Strachey Bussy); both have been translated into many languages and artistically filmed. Less talked about, though deep, original and solid, is Mathilde do Canto's *Dona Josefa*. The preface by Romain Rolland will entice every one to become acquainted with the tragic heroine; we translate from it:—

> I am often nearly desperate in the midst of the books that hurry me on and under the unmerciful rain of manuscripts. I had decided not to read any more of them. . . . *Dona Josefa* had disappeared under a heap of papers; it was only today that I found her again. I read the first pages—and then, I read till the end. . . . *Dona Josefa* is a fine book. It has enfolded me. It is a whole atmosphere of soul and nature. Having finished reading it, I am impregnated by it. It reveals a heart which suffers and enjoys generously, a key-board of multiple sensitivity and of flavour. The womanly soul that fills the book (her sphere which is a part of herself) is admirably true, of a genuineness not belonging to mere narrative, but a fruit one inhales and tastes. Unlike so many intellectual works of art, where intelligence tries to clothe itself with the senses and succeeds only rather poorly in doing it, one can say that here the senses become intelligence. Thought is seen, touched, tested by the eyes, fingers, nostrils and tongue; it throbs within the heart.

Mathilde do Canto has lived in the Azores; she has felt and rendered, as only an artist can, the quaintness, beauty and traditions of the islands; her style is strong, delicate, witty. As in the old *Mymensingh Ballads*, nature is constantly mingled with the feelings of the heroine: sky, ocean, plants are not only a background to the inner drama, they participate in it. Animals add their voices to the symphony; the sheep passing in some tragic landscape; the wings of a bat fluttering in the ghastly night; the far-away gallop of a horse; the queer cry of a lonely peacock. As in the Indo-Persian miniatures all the details are painted with delicacy and charm, with strength and colour. Around the family drama the author revives the old legends: Atlantis, the submerged continent, the cyclone, the floods, after which nothing remained under the new Sun except the fair islands: the Azores, Madeira, the Canaries; Ines, the assassinated young princess whose dead body, royally adorned, crossed the whole continent covered with a gold cloth, surrounded by torches and between crowds of adoring people. (Henry de Montherland has just written a drama on that subject which has been staged in Paris with success, under the title: *La Reine Morte*.)

Mathilde do Canto tells us about the primitive customs still prevalent in the island and intermingled with Christian rites; about life in the convents. Here and there she gives a popular song, a lullaby, a striking local proverb to satisfy the lover of folklore. The problems of home industries, weaving, etc., and those of the workmen and fishermen, have attracted Mathilde and

* *Dona Josefa*. By Mathilde do Canto. (A. Maréchal, Liége. 181 pp. 1945.)

not left her indifferent. Her booklet is rich with philosophical meanings; it carries our thoughts far beyond the island where Josefa dies of a cancer, after having adopted the child of a peasant girl, abandoned by her own son. After the heroine's death her brutal husband adopts the child and loves her. "Everything begins all over again, eternally," writes Mathilde do Canto, "as day after night, sun after rain, spring after winter, so can a little love save the world. . . ."

The author has still several books in manuscript: *Franc Jeu* (*Frank Game*) about the last war; *Une Brebis hors du Troupeau* (*A Sheep out of the Flock*) depicting the Calvinist Geneva of 1900. In *Le Danseur de Corde* (*The Dancer on the Rope*), Mathilde tells us of the suffering of an ambitious young woman who, after an accident, has to have a leg amputated. She masters her humiliations and gains a peace of mind which she is able to share with others. "Most of us have to submit to some secret amputations," Mathilde explained when lending us her manuscript, "but few of us accept and rise above them; that is the symbol of my book." She is a great admirer of Indian thought and her books are no doubt influenced by that preference.

ANDREE KARPELES AND C. A. HOGMAN

Iran. By RICHARD N. FRYE. (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London. viii+126 pp. 2 Maps. 3 Appendices. 1954. 8*s*. 6*d*.)

Readers should not be misled by the brevity and textbook-like arrangement of this concise historical, political, economic and religious analysis of Iran. The author of this excellent work, who is well acquainted with the Middle East, writes with detachment and understanding in this survey which leads up to the many acute current problems. Chief of these are the oil dispute with Great Britain—settled since the book was written—and whether Iran will turn Communist.

Mr. Frye comes nearest to making an explicit diagnosis of Iran's problems when he points to the absence of a middle class, of a link between town and country. It is a pity he does not probe more deeply here. The disillusioned Western-educated intellectuals, who read Kafka, Sartre and others "symptomatic of the Westerner's uncertainty in the great world of science created by him," represent, as he says, the effects of the clash between modern and traditional ways of life in a country which needs the application of at any rate some modern techniques.

Religion goes deep in Iran. It means more than the attempt by Kashani and the Mullahs to regain the ground they lost under Reza Shah by exploiting the bitter nationalist reaction to the power politics played over Iran. The religious tradition goes back to the noble days of Zoroastrianism. And within Islam the finer side of religion has been carried on by the Sufi orders, which are better able to accommodate the Western influence than is the formal Shiite State religion.

In referring to these two strands of religion, Mr. Frye indicates both the hope and desperation of Iran, where it has not proved possible to copy Mustapha Kemal's experiment in Turkey. This inability is not confined to Iran alone. But Mr. Frye states the problem and leaves it; he too well appreciates the permanent factors underlying the uncertainty in this land of rich civilizations, which makes for a mysteriousness that it is difficult for an European to penetrate.

J. C. HUNT

Atlantis to the Latter Days. Inspirationally dictated to H. C. RANDALL-STEVENS (EL EROS) by the Masters Oneferu and Adolemy of the Osirian Group. (The Aquarian Press, London. 160 pp. Illustrated. 1954. 13*s.*); *Death—An Interesting Journey: From Teachings by the Messenger.* Compiled by STANLEY BEDFORD. (The Alcuin Press, Welwyn Garden City. 151 pp. 1954. 10*s.* 6*d.*)

These books, as denoted, claim to be inspired from discarnate sources. The "Atlanto-Egyptian" writings were dictated by an inner voice, the illustrations being drawn automatically; the "death" messages came through a deep-trance medium, Mr. Bedford's wife. In both cases there was reluctance at first to let the mediumism develop—with Mrs. Bedford it only did so after a serious thyroid illness. In both cases the matter and style of writing are insignificant, compared with those of many works of imagination produced normally. Mr. Randall-Stevens' writings, despite the assertion to the contrary, bear all the marks of a subliminal medley. Daydreams cut one off from reality; automatism and "disconnection" are opposed to psychological integration; and, even were the results spectacular, the eventual price for the dichotomy might prove too high.

The "Atlantean" narrative under review, a revised and enlarged re-issue of *The Voice Out of Egypt* (published 1935), is an episodic mixture having a pantheon of Egypto-Jewish colouring, with additions (Sparks of the Cosmic Overplus, etc.). Its version of Atlantis (*c.* 30,000-15,000 B.C.) "left but a mere handful of people to carry on the civilization" in Egypt (the transcriber having been himself Akhnaton). Apart from the briefest of mentions, the ancient Asian and American civilizations are treated as non-existent, even though the former at least (older than that of Egypt) has a vast mass of records and literature, giving an unparalleled field for research on the subject of still earlier civilizations. One can see how personal and subjective this account is, by comparing it with *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky. There she adduces a weight of evidence—from innumerable, almost contemporary sources, as well as from the discoveries of geologists, anthropologists and so forth—as to the existence of former continents and giant races. Mr. Randall-Stevens' fantasy does not fit in the picture.

The second book has more of the ordinary spiritualistic character. On the data given, one cannot judge whether the "subconscious" alone or other factors too are at work. One reads, "There is no evil in the beyond, therefore there are no evil spirits." Or again, obsession "by an evil spirit is impossible. . . . If they did exist, they would not be allowed to influence us. The authority of God's Law is so compelling; they would be placed under proper restraint." Remorse in the spirit world is stated to be enough punishment for misdeeds in this. All this might well be the "wish-fulfilment" of a soft-hearted nature, not overburdened with a sense of logic. On the other hand, the lulling of people's fears might well be a first step to their victimization by the subjective evil they deny. The very lack of shadow in the picture indicates its falsity, especially when one compares it with definite teachings about the after-death states that explain the truths taught about them by all the religions, under various allegorical forms. These teachings are not to be found in passive trance. The first intuitive fear of this mediumism was a surer guide.

E. W.

Marxism or Islam? By MAZHERUDDIN SIDDIQI. (Orientalia, Lahore. xix+168 pp. 1954. Rs. 7/8)

Mankind must choose, this author contends, between Marxism and Islam: all other faiths have shown their inadequacy.

Marxism is on the face of it the more vigorous and materially powerful. But it has defects. The greater part of the essay is a criticism of its philosophy, ethics and political theory. The author makes many sound points and must rank among the best critics of Marxism. He makes some mistakes, however. Marxism does not separate the knowing mind completely from the matter it knows. This is one of the errors of "mechanical" materialism which the dialectic claims to correct.

Still, no comprehensive philosophy is free from faults. Men can endure quite a lot of hocus-pocus if its practical outcome is satisfactory. It is here that the author's criticism falls short. He notices that the moral level of the Russian rulers has declined since Lenin's day, but his instances are confined to foreign policy. It is surely relevant to his theme that, tried out in practice for 35 years, Marxism has produced a truly horrific despotism, and even in a much diluted form, in Britain, has provoked doubts whether it must not ultimately destroy all initiative.

Mr. Siddiqi then advances as his alternative a version of Islam which, though doubtless authentic, has not been practised since the time of the third Caliph. He quotes texts enjoining support of the poor, and one from the Hadith implies that men should surrender all surplus wealth. Hence he claims that Islam demands socialism. The texts will hardly bear so much weight: they can be taken as supporting "welfarism."

One would have expected Islamic thinkers, beginning almost on a clean slate, to devise some new plan whereby to avoid the defects which all Western systems, including socialism, have shown.

P. SPRATT

The Awakening. By SHANKER RAM. (A. N. Purnah and Co., Madras. 48 pp. 1954. Re. 1/-)

Shanker Ram writes, "I am a simple man" and he believes that simple people the world over will agree with him that hatred and violence cannot bring peace and that "bombs are the concentrated violence of hateful minds."

He imagines a Human Congress, with delegates from the people of every nation, determined to act for the "Human Family" as a unit because

> ...the time has come when our family has to decide...either to succeed in making Gandhiji's ideal of Ahimsa a reality, or cease to exist as a human family.

The Congress's Fifth Resolution sums up the intent and plan:—

> This Congress of Humans votes for the total abandonment of war as a necessary prelude to World Government and calls on all the influential members of the Family to start Ahimsa Societies in every...corner of the world, since...Non-violence alone can save the Human Family from annihilation through atom bombs and similar deadly weapons.

This terse booklet is valuable because full of real insight, common-sense ideas and understanding, and its simple sincerity is bound to make a deep appeal to every human heart. It should be widely circulated, and its suggestions considered.

E. P. T.

Negro Slave Songs in the United States. By MILES MARK FISHER. With a Foreword by RAY ALLEN BILLINGTON. (Published for the American Historical Association. Cornell University Press, New York; Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, London. xv+223 pp. 1953. $4.00; 32*s.*)

Most of us have heard a certain number of "spirituals," perhaps "Joshua fit de battle o' Jericho" or "Swing low, sweet chariot"; and a good many people are acquainted with Marc Connolly's brilliant play *Green Pastures.* We have therefore known for some years that the Negro slaves adopted the Bible stories with a childlike and pathetic literalness. A point which is rather surprising in Dr. Fisher's book is that the songs of longing for release do not always mean a pining for "heab'n" but, quite as often, for a chance of getting to Liberia or of returning to Africa.

The inevitable pathos and the spirit of endurance in most of these songs make us feel a vicarious pride in the noble work of emancipation which was achieved by Abraham Lincoln, his generals and their volunteers (not forgetting Walt Whitman). Dr. Fisher suggests that Moses was the "patron saint" of those poor slaves—some of whom, he says, were well treated and given posts of responsibility. Listen!

Go down, Moses,
Way down in Egypt land,
Tell ole Pharaoh
Let my people go.

A reviewer, if he wishes to praise, is usually wise to let the author speak for himself. Indeed, this was Sir John Squire's precept when he was editing that gallant paper *The London Mercury.* So here is a fascinating excerpt from Dr. Fisher's summing-up:—

> Negroes evidently had something that offset the wretched and unmoral pictures that were usually drawn of their total situations, something that gave them the strength to survive overwhelming hardships. Help from the federal government in preventing starvation...cannot entirely explain why the turmoil of emancipation did not create a worse reaction in the Negro people. One of the reasons why it did not was the uncommon strength of the Negro spirit, and a major source of this strength was the spirituals....Many Negroes succumbed to the rigors of American slavery, and all of them might perhaps have become dispirited and have died out, according to expectations, had they not had their songs in the night....
>
> The popularity of spirituals in Europe is too well known to need rehearsal here. In both the Eastern and the Western hemispheres have the spirituals captured their listeners. Perhaps never before have the songs of a people woven such charms.

However, we must attribute some of the charm to the dark beauty of so many Negro voices.

CLIFFORD BAX

Persian Poems: An Anthology of Verse Translations. Edited by A. J. ARBERRY. (Everyman's Library. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London. xvi+239 pp. 1954. 6*s.*)

This volume is a very welcome addition to Everyman's Library and the editor has supplied an interesting and illuminating preface, giving a brief account of the history of English translations of Persian poetry, with some notes on the art of translation.

The poems are given under the headings of Quatrain, Lyric, Ode, Didactic and Epic, and, as one would expect in a collection of Persian poems, include some in a mystical strain, such as "The Veil" (Attar, p. 44), "Mystic Cups" (Iraqi, p. 57) and "Revelation" (Hafiz, p. 77).

There are examples of the verse of poets of the classical period and also of a number of modern poets, of whom Iqbal (pp. 136 ff.) is the greatest and best known, but others, such as Shahriyar (pp. 107 ff.), are also responsible for some fine poetry, translated by the editor. He is also the translator of some of the older poems, notably some

quatrains by Rumi, which are moving in their simplicity:—

> If life be gone, fresh life to you
> God offereth,
> A life eternal, to renew
> This life of death.
>
> The Fount of Immortality
> In Love is found;
> Then come, and in this boundless sea
> Of Love be drowned. (p. 36)

Some of the older poems, and nearly all of the modern verse, will be new to most English readers. While some of the extracts are long, much longer than is usual in an anthology, this is all to the good, as it gives the reader a better idea of the poet's work and also of the subject concerned. There is a valuable bibliography and also indices of the names of poets and translators. Readers might have liked to know much more about the poets than is given here; translators are dealt with more adequately.

To all lovers of poetry, and of Persian literature, this book can be strongly recommended.

MARGARET SMITH

A Tagore Testament. Translated from the original Bengali of RABINDRANATH TAGORE by INDU DUTT. Cover and Frontispiece by CYRIL SATORSKY. (Meridian Books, London. xiv+117 pp. 1953. 10*s*. 6*d*.)

A Tagore Testament comprises several essays, speeches made on various birthdays and other pieces written in answer to questions about religion or to criticism of his philosophy, linked together by poems. The book is not therefore an autobiography in the strict sense; rather is it an expression of beliefs and philosophy. The prefatory Translator's Note is excellent in its analysis of Tagore's achievement. It quotes T. S. Eliot's phrase, "the intersection of the timeless with time," as expressing the true apprehension of the poet, and particularly of *this* poet, his awareness of eternal values and their effect upon human life, "this life that is the perpetual playground of the Infinite." Above all, Tagore was aware not only of the transcendence of the Deity, but His immanence. To many he seems withdrawn from normal life, but surely the vocation of a poet is to see life from a different angle, to direct our thoughts to the things of the spirit. Tagore himself, late in life, made no claim to be a philosopher; he described himself simply as a poet.

The book fails on one point. A great man's literary work cannot be wholly divorced from his personal life; a short biographical note and a brief account of the wonderful experiment of Santiniketan would have added immensely to its value. The very brief letter at the end, and the few references to Santiniketan in passing, assume too much previous knowledge in the reader. Since the translation is obviously intended for Western readers, this background is necessary for a generation which does not know Tagore.

G. E. PEARSALL

Valmiki Ramayana. By N. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYER. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. 236 pp. 1954. Re. 1/12)

This English abridgment of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, forming a companion volume to the *Mahabharata* by "C.R.," is a welcome addition to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Book University Series, whose praiseworthy objective is to render to Indian literature and thought the same service as the Pelican and Penguin Books have done to English. The book carries a Foreword by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the course of which he says, "I do not think any person can

understand India or her people fully without possessing a knowledge of the two magnificent epics that are India's pride and treasure."

In a fairly lengthy Introduction, the translator discusses the merits of the epic and tries to explain why the *Ramayana* enjoys a prestige and popularity even greater than that of the *Mahabharata*. As against modern critics like the late V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, he upholds the view that Sri Rama was an *avatara* of divinity and not a mere mortal, and claims that that was Valmiki's own view. His approach is therefore "orthodox." In making the abridgment, he has included nothing which is not to be found in the original.

Comparisons may be invidious, but they are often inevitable. So far as felicity of diction goes, this has to yield place to Rajaji's version of the *Mahabharata*. The unnecessary sectional headings like "Synopsis" or "Rama to be crowned" are awkward and break up the continuity of the narrative. The transliteration of Sanskrit words is not quite uniform. But these are minor shortcomings in a worthy performance.

K. GURU DUTT

Highlights of Modern Literature. Edited by FRANCIS BROWN. (The New American Library, New York. 240 pp. 1954. 35 cents)

Highlights of Modern Literature is a collection of essays from *The New York Times* Book Review. Francis Brown, who edits the section, calls them "fugitive pieces." The book seeks to save the important fugitives from oblivion. The blurb calls them "literary delights" but they are more than highly pleasing. They are absorbingly rewarding.

These 58 informal essay-reviews are remarkable not only because they deal with important trends and men of letters but also because they are written by leading *littérateurs* such as W. H. Auden, E. M. Forster, Stephen Spender, André Maurois, Thomas Mann, Sean O'Casey, Alan Pryce-Jones, Louis Kronenberger, Katherine Ann Porter, etc. As Francis Brown says in the introduction, "the choice of subject is only the beginning. It is the treatment of the subject that brings revelation."

The essays are arranged in six sections—"On Books," "On Writers and Writing," "Appraisals and Reappraisals," "On Poetry," "On History and Biography," and "Some Names Remembered." Here are but a few indications of the feast:—

Probably the most powerful effect of literature on us is a moral effect, and this effect, rightly appreciated, is what gives literature its unique value.—ARTHUR MIZENENR, "What Makes Great Books Great."

If he plays false, it is in order to speak more truly.—ELIZABETH BOWEN, "The Writer's Peculiar World."

The history of the Snob-Value of the Obscure deserves a book in itself.—IVOR BROWN, "In Praise of Comedy."

Appreciation doesn't mind your writing a little poetry about people you admire: what it won't let you write about them is fiction.—LOUIS KRONENBERGER, "A Time to Speak Words of Praise."

Nothing makes a man learn faster than the necessity for teaching.—FRANK O'CONNOR, "A Lyric Voice in the Irish Theatre."

We are living in a time which above all challenges the concept of the individual.—STEPHEN SPENDER, "Can't We Do Without the Poets?"

The best poetry should evoke suggestions which please and satisfy but do not exhaust themselves on the hardness of intellect.—RICHARD EBERHART, "Why I Say It in Verse."

MUMTAZ MOTIWALLA

You Will Survive Death. By SHERWOOD EDDY. (The Omega Press, Reigate, Surrey. 175 pp. 1954. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

This book is concerned with the fascinating question of the individual's survival of death. By survival of death Dr. Eddy does not mean "pantheistic absorption into impersonal being nor...mere biological or social immortality." What he does mean is "the survival of an individual, personal consciousness, with memory of the past and a personality that shall be spiritually recognizable to my friends."

The author states that he has always held this belief on grounds of faith alone. He met many enlisted men in the two world wars and many bereaved relatives, however, who did not have this faith but who sought evidence for it. Accordingly, in order that he might be able to help such people, he began to investigate the recorded empirical psychical research of others on immortality and to seek direct personal evidence, through the agency of mediums of the highest integrity. This he did, although up to the time of beginning his investigations (1937) he had a robust prejudice against psychical research, as the field was "full of superstition and fraud." It is in this context that Dr. Eddy's conclusions must be viewed.

After 12 years of close study, whilst admitting all the limitations and peculiar difficulties connected with psychic investigations, and whilst acknowledging the meagre results of the past 70 years' work, he affirms:—

> ...just as there is no contradiction between my religious faith and scientific truth, so there is none between my religious experience, which is based on faith, and scientific psychic evidence for survival.

Perhaps one may be allowed to ask whether, as the author appears to admit (*vide* p. 171), faith has outweighed reason in convincing him of survival. Yet undoubtedly the book carries the ring of complete sincerity and is a clear and stimulating presentation of a most difficult problem.

One small point—on p. 146 there is some confusion of dates.

WILLIAM TAYLOR

Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times. Edited, annotated and translated by E. R. HUGHES. (Everyman's Library. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London. xlv+336 pp. 1954. 6*s.*)

There is a quality of sweet reason and luminous common sense even in the mysticism of the classical Chinese outlook that makes a strong appeal to many Western minds. Its tone of humanitarian feeling, its scientific logic and its organic naturalism chime in friendlier fashion than more transcendent works. It is not surprising, therefore, though gratifying, to find the Everyman's Library reprinting E. R. Hughes' selection of classical Chinese writings for the third time (in a larger format, and with minor revisions and an additional preface). Sinologues will need no reminder of its value, but "Everyman" will find it worth exploring, as the following random example shows:—

> Master Tseng said, "Every day I examine myself in three ways: whether in my transacting of business for other men I have been faithful to them; whether in my intercourse with my friends I have been true in word; whether I have not passed on teachings which I have not mastered." (*Analects*, 1.4).

Mr. Hughes' Introduction, with its background survey and its imaginative analysis of the principles of translation, is worth reading for its own sake. He himself by nature sees the nobler aspect of the meanings of the terms he works upon.

E. W.

PREPARING FOR WORLD FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

[In August 1953 the World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government and the World Movement for World Federal Government met together in conference at Copenhagen to consider proposals for the Revision of the United Nations Charter. This year the two organizations met separately. Here we reprint brief reports of both Conferences.—ED.]

The fourth Conference of the World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government was held in London from September 4th to 10th and was attended by members of Parliament from many countries of the world as well as by friends and sympathizers. For the first time such a conference was held in a world free from actual war even though it was not at peace.

Debates were held on the Resolutions of the previous year's Conference at Copenhagen, which deal with both the larger sphere of World Government and the smaller and more pressing need, the revision of the United Nations Charter.

The ideal set up is to make the United Nations into an international government, and all human beings into world citizens. They would replace the Security Council by a world Executive Council, and set up a bicameral World legislature. They would have a world disarmament plan added to the United Nations Charter. They would have supervision by United Nations Inspectors.

Though this ideal is set up no-one expects that it will immediately be reached. The immediate practical idea is to make the United Nations work in the way everyone knows it ought to work, and to open it to all states which will accept the necessary obligations.

Ideals must always be ahead of present-day facts, but they must be constantly before us until they do become established facts, making way for higher and higher ideals. The World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government is doing good foundational work.

E. BESWICK

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Delegates from over 20 countries met in London at the end of August for the Sixth Annual Conference of the World Movement for World Federal Government. They examined ways and means of publicizing the "Copenhagen Plan" that was drawn up last year at the joint conference held with the World Association of Parliamentarians for World Government.

A note of urgency pervaded the proceedings, for the Charter of the United Nations comes up for review in September 1955. By co-operating at all levels with the parliamentarians, the World Movement seeks to act as a pressure group working through the numerous international organizations that are connected with the U.N. and on a national level through political parties. A special committee was also set up to study the attitude of the Soviet countries.

An encouraging feature of the conference was the favourable reaction it had from the British press. However, while the Movement has much wider support than its relatively small and scattered membership would suggest, it will be hard put to it to co-ordinate its sympathizers so that their voice is heard in the councils of the nations.

J. C. HUNT

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ORIENTALISTS

On Saturday, August 21st, between 900 and 1,000 scholars of all nationalities gathered at Cambridge, England, to attend the Twenty-third International Congress of Orientalists, held under the presidentship of Sir Ralph Turner of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. It was a remarkable Congress; for, for the first time in many years, Russian scholars were present. There were also members from Poland. The Congress was therefore more completely "international" than for many years past.

In a talk upon "Historical Significance of Sectarian Movements in India," printed for us in translation, A. Diakov, one of the Russians, said:—

> ...the study of the Bhakti movement from the point of view of its social roots, the study of different trends of this movement which reflected the interests of different strata of society (and we know that this movement was by far not homogeneous) is still in its initial stage....One of the aims of this report is to draw the attention of the historian to the prime importance of the study of the Bhakti movement for the correct understanding of the social life of mediæval India.

The Congress lasted a week. It was divided into 11 Sections: Egyptology; Semitic Studies; Assyriology; Iranian, Armenian and Central Asian Studies; Altaic Studies; Turcology (History); Indian Studies; Far East; Islam (divided into two sections, Language, Literature and Art, and History and Religion); Orient-Occident and Christian-Orient; and Africa. Altogether about four hundred lectures or papers were offered. Two General Meetings and a Closing Section were held, and the usual receptions and social gatherings aided the friendly mixing of East and West, race and race, nation and nation. The Russians, 20 of them, had brought some films which they arranged to show to delegates. They depicted the progress made by the U.S.S.R. in the underdeveloped lands over which it had control.

Apart from the lectures given to the different Sections and the discussions which took place, the general themes of the Congress, discussed at the General Meetings, were two: cataloguing of manuscripts so that the individual library catalogues should be at the disposal of all other libraries—an immense work, for which the keen co-operation of all countries was essential; and the relationship between Orientalism and History.

In this connection two booklets had been prepared: *Oriental Manuscript Collections in the Libraries of Great Britain and Ireland* by J. D. Pearson, M.A., Librarian, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, published by the Royal Asiatic Society, and *Orientalism and History*, edited by Denis Sinor, Secretary-General of the Congress. The latter, with Preface and Epilogue, consisted of five articles: "The Ancient Near East" by H. Frankford (who died before the Congress), "Islam" by Bernard Lewis, "India and its Cultural Empire" by J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "China" by Edwin G. Pulleybank and "Central Eurasia" by Denis Sinor.

Mr. Sinor made an interesting and important point in his Preface: "It is always difficult to convince people that what they do not know can be as important as what they know." He asked for a closer relationship between Orientalist and Historian, that each might know the difficulties of the other, and he suggested that Orientalists should perhaps more fully realize "how their fields of study can, and should, be set at their proper place in general history."

Mr. Cyril Philips, Chairman at the Meeting, referred to the need of his-

torians to observe the "discipline of history," and he emphasized this especially at the present time when "new" histories are being written. There was great need, he felt, for history to be severed from the political opinions of the historian.

In some of the discussions an appeal was made that Eastern and Western archæologists should work together. There was need for some press to produce, along the same lines as the Cambridge histories, a comprehensive history of the East.

The dangers of so much specialization and so much attention to technicalities that the broader aspects of learning and life were neglected were once admirably made clear by the theme of the meeting being lost in a discussion as to just when Mahomet consummated his marriage.

A similar discussion took place at one of the Sectional meetings, dealing with the letter and the spirit of laws. If the "letter" only is obeyed more and more laws have to be added in order to clear away the multitudinous efforts of the human mind to "get round" the spirit while attending to the "letter."

On the other hand it must be admitted that only by combining the efforts of the "dry-as-dust" specialist with the knowledge of the larger pattern of history and life can a truly comprehensive, total history of mankind be achieved and a true perspective of past and present be attained.

Reference was made to the difficulty of getting enough money to continue oriental studies in Great Britain. The London School of Oriental and African Studies was in a better position in this respect than certain other centres of this branch of learning in other university towns and the need for more funds was urgent. Reference was made to the great effort made in this field by Russia and her allies.

E. Beswick

YUGOSLAV CULTURE

A Yugoslav Cultural Evening was arranged by the Indian Institute of Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore, on September 27th, with the Yugoslav Embassy's co-operation and under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice B. Vasudevamurthy. It was a great success in arousing appreciation of a distant country's cultural achievements. It also gave an insight into Yugoslavia's history, democratic aims and independent policy and into her problems and the spirit in which these were being met.

Besides an illuminating talk on Yugoslav literature by Mr. Cedomir Minderovic, Counsellor for Cultural Affairs in the Yugoslav Embassy, there were beautiful scenic films. And, most revealing, there were translations from living Yugoslav poets, beautifully read by the Rev. L. M. Schiff and Mrs. Schiff. Even the translations were evocative and let shine through the true poetic sensitivity and fire. They gave a glimpse of the sacrifices that lay behind the achievement of Yugoslavia's freedom and of the beauty and splendour that, as Mr. Schiff said, had been distilled out of suffering.

Truly, as Mr. Minderovic said in concluding his talk, "the most noble and the most lasting links between nations are cultural links."

CORRESPONDENCE

A CANADIAN MAKES A FEW COMPARISONS

The term "American" as used to denote only the citizens of the United States of America is obviously a misnomer, since Mexicans and Canadians, speaking in terms of geography, are no less Americans, but, since custom legalizes everything, the term is accepted in the more restricted sense.

Mexicans, whose culture and racial characteristics stem from a Spanish origin and make them readily distinguishable, are rarely taken for U.S. Americans. But Canadians, because of similar speech and countenance, very often are and sometimes resent it with considerable heat. North Americans we are, if you like, but please remember the qualification.

In spite of being inundated these later years with seas of journalistic Americanism we have managed to keep ourselves sane and afloat. Having developed what our great neighbours to the south call "sales resistance," we take the printed word with the proverbial pinch of salt and can recognize propaganda a long way off.

Most Canadians have travelled by car in the United States and have had the experience, when stopping for a petrol fill at one of the many gaudy stations where cars are serviced (and the service well charged for), of hearing the attendant remark as he flutters his duster across the windshield: "Too bad you people can't get away from the British and come in with us." We parry politely with: "Do you think we might be better off with you?" while the tongue threatens to betray us into asking: "What makes you think we would like you any better than we like the British?" But we remember our guest manners just in time. Besides, we feel they would never understand that. Since in these times no weaker nation can stand entirely alone, we prefer to keep our association with the Commonwealth rather than be utterly swallowed by the United States. Americans regard us Canadians as being a bit slow on the uptake and not quite alive to our great opportunities—Oh, fine people, of course! But just not "savvy."

However, there is nothing amiss with the hospitality we find below our southern border. Friends down there insist upon conveying us here and there, bent on showing us their wonderful country where everything is "the biggest and best in the world." When they come to us they are usually good visitors, putting up with gravel and even dirt roads in this province of Saskatchewan, since only the main highways are paved, although in Eastern Canada they find roads that are equal to their own.

When some wealthy American's pencil points to a map at some remote northern location and decides to go "way up in Canada for a little fishing," the guides and resort men will sometimes have cause to remember his largesse for a long time. If, on the other hand, he and a companion or two decide to fly up there in their own plane, the chances are they will set themselves down either by accident or ill-design at some point of no return as far as their own power is concerned. Then the Canadian Air Force must send scout planes to locate them and perhaps a helicopter to fly them out. Our government spends many thousands of dollars yearly on such rescue missions. It may be interesting to note that psychologists explain this recurring desire to retreat to primitive surroundings such as our ancestors knew as being in itself an unconscious protest

against a dominating materialism and a complex way of life wherein the business of getting a living is all-important and the art of living for its own sake is largely obscured.

Canadians, being a northern people, possess an immense drive toward work, which is necessary in opening up a new country. But the creative arts do not flourish under such conditions. At present they tend to be imitative of what is done in other countries or too self-consciously Canadian. This cultural lag will right itself when there is more leisure time for artistic expansion.

It comes as a surprise to newcomers here that wives of cabinet ministers and professional men usually do their own cooking and housework as well as care for their children, unless they are prevented from doing so by illness. The many mechanical aids they may have raises the standard of cleanliness but seldom actually lessens the labour involved, since the cleaning and care of household appliances itself forms a large part of the housework. Then again, many small machines of electric motivation are ornamental rather than useful—the batter mixer sits upon its shelf while the busy housewife beats up her cake with a spoon because it is too much trouble to get it out and clean it afterwards for just one cake. Taking everything into consideration, the Western woman with her wide social and civic obligations is, during her years of child-rearing, among the hardest worked in the world.

We are often told that in densely populated countries many people must go hungry throughout the greater part of their lives. This knowledge makes us uncomfortable ; we would like to do something about it and sometimes we make a gesture in that direction. But we cannot realize the condition of hunger because few of us have ever been truly hungry. What passes for hunger with us is usually nothing more than a sensation of partial vacancy within the stomach which urges us to repeat the pleasurable experience of eating.

It sometimes happens that a case of destitution is discovered and given sufficient publicity to unlock the vast stores of sentimental sympathy possessed by the American public. Then the erstwhile unfortunates are showered with gifts of money and merchandise, which have been known to include motor-cars and even a modern home. Canadians, however, tend to be less reckless in the matter of signing cheques.

In comparing a highly mechanized society with another based largely upon human labour one should remember the advantage of the disadvantages. If there is less opportunity for vicarious forms of enjoyment such as supplied by television sets and many vast sport spectacles, the people tend to develop more satisfying human relationships than are likely to be found in a swiftly moving existence.

We have heard that in Eastern lands the last years of a person's life are a time of tranquillity since respect and obedience to elders is still the rule. This is no longer true in America, where too much emphasis is placed upon the opinions and desires of youth. Within limits it is well to encourage the young to take part in affairs, but the juvenile section of Western society has been getting out of control, as anyone may learn from the daily press. But even this condition seems to have run its course, and there is encouraging evidence that the pendulum is swinging back again.

ELLA DAVIS

A SOLUTION TO THE DOWRY PROBLEM

[We opened our columns in May 1954 to the discussion of the dowry practice which is very common in India today, and of how it can best be overcome. Shri S. Balasubramania Iyer in our May issue argued for legislation against the dowry system. In the August ARYAN PATH Shri A. Viswanath saw social reform and especially individual reform as the solution. Here "**Kar**" takes up in earnest the education of public opinion and particularly the arousing of the conscience of the young men concerned. His views on "bridegroom-buying" are sufficiently challenging to stand on their own merits. He is followed by **Shri Mohan,** who suggests a solution to this problem.—ED.]

SACRAMENT OR SACRILEGE

Hindus have had to contend against many social evils, such as widow-burning, child-marriage, untouchability and the dowry system. Many of these have disappeared; others are fast disappearing now. But an abominable evil is the system of bridegroom-buying politely called the dowry system. This insidious disease is now widespread. The very economic pressure which has forced young men to put off marriage till they can stand on their own feet has made most of them more unscrupulous in the matter of exacting a dowry. But in fairness I have to add that some young men do not stoop to swindling parents-in-law, and, secondly, that not merely young men but the elders too are to blame. Modern education may have done little to counteract this evil; but it is not correct to say that "the real defect lies in modern education, which has no connection with the existing social customs." It is modern education that has awakened the social conscience to the diabolical nature of the customs enumerated above.

In fighting against the dowry system we have to adopt the methods we have followed in our fight against the other evils. It is only when the majority of the people have learnt to condemn a social evil that any legislation against it will produce the desired result. This grave and momentous task of educating public opinion has to be accomplished by the teachers, journalists and men of letters, who are the intellectual and spiritual guardians of society. A rich and humane culture is the surest remedy for any social disease. It is more difficult to correct wrong-headed elders than ignorant youngsters; therefore the appeal should be made primarily to the sense of self-respect and the conscience of young men.

We boast that we are a people with a spiritual outlook; and we profess that the initiation into knowledge and marriage are the two major sacraments in a boy's life. No idea of elective affinity may find a place in our accepted code of marriage and morals; yet the code does not preclude, but rather enjoins, mutual respect and community of thought and aspiration between bride and bridegroom. The bride is the *sahadharmini*, the spiritual partner of the bridegroom.

Nowadays, marriage is no more a spiritual covenant, not a partnership of wedded souls, but a commercial transaction. Some of the bridegroom's elders who drive a hard and squalid bargain are seemingly very "pious" persons.

The young bridegroom, who is supposed to have been initiated into the transcendent Wisdom of the Upanishads on the day of his *Upanayanam*, is now taught, not to look for beauty of person and character in his spiritual partner, but to think of the money she will bring him. With his mind preoccupied with the rustle of currency notes and the glitter of gold, a young bridegroom can hardly feel the enchantment of the wedding hour,

Surcharged, within him, overblest to move
till his spirit sank
Beneath a sun that wakes a weary world
To its dull round of ordinary cares;
A man too happy for mortality.

Thus a blight falls on the wedding hour itself, because a sacrament has been turned into a sacrilege. The responsibility of the parents and other elders of the bridegroom is heavy indeed.

When once the bridegroom has demanded and received his price, his self-respect and his happiness are bartered away. He cannot greet his bride with a smile and cannot expect an answering sweetness of smile. She is likely to feel that life with a husband so purchased is unspeakably degrading. In most cases, the bride has not the courage to speak out; but there will be

Curses not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

The husband, having slain the soul of their relationship, must, unless he is thick-skinned, feel that

...renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Thus the spiritual ruin of the marriage is complete.

The husband not only forfeits love and happiness but is a loser even from the materialistic point of view. If daughters are born to him, his own vicious example will be cited against him when he attempts to find bridegrooms for them and he will be mercilessly fleeced.

I have dwelt at some length on the spiritual and economic consequences of the dowry system, because I want the young men to realize what irreparable injury they do to themselves by expecting a dowry.

While condemning the dowry system, I should like to observe that a well-to-do father ought to realize that his daughter has a claim on him as well as his son, and that he ought to make some provision for her. But whatever money the father voluntarily gives his daughter should be absolutely her own; her husband should scrupulously avoid putting any kind of pressure, directly or indirectly, upon his father-in-law to extract money. I subjoin these reflections on parental duty to a daughter because I am aware of certain illiberal attacks on the Hindu Code Bill.

I should also add that I have occasionally come across a sensitive, self-respecting young man who, on reaching man's estate, hesitates to ask help even from his own father, because he believes that he must depend on his own earnings and hates parasitism of every kind. Such a youth will never suffer the unutterable degradation and misery of those who put money above love, dignity and the grace of life. When the young men of this subcontinent develop a true dignity and refinement of feeling, we shall indeed be a great and a happier nation, worthy of our spiritual heritage.

Bangalore KAR

A SOLUTION TO THE DOWRY PROBLEM

The dowry system is truly a common disease from which the whole community is suffering. A large part of Hindu society especially is badly affected by this evil. There are, fortunately, people of intelligence eager to wipe out this blemish. Shri Balasubramania Iyer and Shri A. Viswanath have presented some well-considered means.

The legislative way suggested by Shri Iyer is really a good one, provided it is acted upon seriously by the Government. But I agree with Shri Viswanath, who rightly calls the custom of dowry a social evil, that the best and real solution to the problem is social reform,

which can best come about through individual reform. He does not, however, tell us how the minds of our young men are to be changed.

I now propose a more concrete means, which may be of some use.

In my opinion the best way is to establish a society to carry on vigorous campaigns in all parts of the country against the custom. It must be composed of men and women of both strong characters and sincere wills. I here chalk out a programme for such a society, in brief.

The society must carry out propaganda against the custom and place its dreadful effects before the public from the religious, social and political points of view. The members of the society must undertake to marry their girls and boys according to the society's rules, which should forbid the taking of a dowry in any form. In this way they will establish concrete examples of a social ideal and induce people to follow it. Afterwards the society must perform a *satyagraha* in the most beneficial and truly Gandhian way before and during the celebration of any marriage in which a dowry has been demanded.

The heroes of the nation must first plunge into the work and then the masses will follow. I request all reformers and workers for the nation's uplift—and there is no lack of such—to pay greater attention to this question. This should be taken as a *yagna*, just as *Bhoodan* is, and a great deal of work must be done in this direction.

BRAJENDRA MOHAN

Muzaffarnagar, U.P.

POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING

A brilliant review of Shri Nirad Chaudhuri's autobiography began: "This is a provocative book." (For another see THE ARYAN PATH, Vol. XXIII, p. 84.) We feel the same of his article "Passage To and From India" in *Encounter* (London), June 1954. Shri Chaudhuri holds the unusual view that the failure of the Indo-British political relationship was due to the failure of the British truly to Westernize Indians, and the failure of social intercourse between the British and the Indians.

His principle is that peoples that cannot achieve a minimum of common culture cannot achieve political understanding, let alone build a single political community. The British erred in supposing that maintenance of law and order in a colony was a sufficient basis for stable political relations. The Americans are in some danger today (though not as much as is commonly believed) of supposing that helping other nations towards economic prosperity is a sufficient basis. Political understanding can be achieved only by peoples that treat one another as equals—and, as Shri Chaudhuri finely says, "men do not treat as equals those who are not of their psychological species." Shri Chaudhuri advises the West to think of converting "the single zoological species called man into one psychological species."

This, indeed, will have to be achieved. The true way is to humanize once again the masses of *men* who have allowed themselves to shrink to merely passive citizens of political states.

G. R. C.

ENDS AND SAYINGS

"——————ends of verse
And sayings of philosophers."
HUDIBRAS

Amidst the prevailing atmosphere of excessive complacency matched by extreme cynicism in many spheres of Indian life, wise words of constructive, discriminating self-criticism are infinitely welcome. An example *par excellence* is the bold and noble Convocation Address of Sir Mirza Ismail to the young University of Poona on the 30th of last September. We hope that his hearers responded graciously to his appeal to give, on many topical matters, "dispassionate consideration to fact and argument."

In seeking to revive and unify the culture of the different races in India, while we must be ourselves firmly rooted in our own soil, we

> need have no fear of becoming less vitally Indian if we absorb what the west has to give.... There is not a single sphere in the life of the mind and spirit in which we cannot profit very greatly by the absorption, so far as our own genius permits, of western thought.... It is in literature, however, that our need is greatest.

If Sir Mirza argued the case for a careful study of the English language, he was equally anxious that the various Indian languages should be protected from the intellectual imperialism of the Hindi-speaking fanatics. Here, as on the question of Basic Education, Sir Mirza rightly deplored that a fine idea had become a fetish and that "unfortunately the planners have chosen to exaggerate, distort and misapply this idea."

In the international sphere, we need to recognize

> that there is room enough on this spacious globe for all ways of life, or, as the old Chinese proverb puts it, that two men may sleep on the same pillow and dream different dreams.

In India, as in the world as a whole, the greatest need of the hour is a spirit of unity and tolerance for the views and acts of others. Every group or community must be prepared to make some sacrifice, sacrifice of self-interest and self-esteem, in the furtherance of our common aims and ambitions. *The law of sacrifice is the ethical principle that dominates all life, the only light that guides human conscience.* It is an essential element in the realization of our national destiny.

Sir Mirza's address is not a bundle of beautiful platitudes; it raises the deepest considerations in the most broad-minded way possible. His own words about the humanities may be aptly applied to his own address: "There is nothing superficial about the fundamentals."

Gandhi Jayanti Day, October 2nd, was observed as usual by the Indian Institute of Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore, with a Special Meeting to honour the memory of India's greatest son in modern times. Dr. B. Ch. Chhabra, Deputy Director-General of Archæology, Government of India, gave the birth-anniversary address on "Gandhi as Brahmachari and Mahatma."

He ascribed Gandhiji's success to a factor little taken into account today—his faithful observance of *brahmacharya* in thought, word and deed, for more than 40 years. He had taken the *brahmacharya* vow, which included celibacy, at the age of 37 and had kept it. He had written:—

> Every day of the vow has taken me nearer the knowledge that in Brahmacharya lies the protection of the body, the mind and the soul.... Every day revealed a fresh beauty in it.

Self-imposed discipline, Dr. Chhabra said, was necessary to the acquiring

of moral excellence. He drew attention to Gandhiji's book, *Self-Restraint vs. Self-Indulgence*. Gandhiji had by his life set a great example which, if widely followed, would restore the country to its former greatness. "Try to follow in the footsteps of the great," Dr. Chhabra urged. "If you can't go all the way, even a few steps will stand you in good stead," as, he pointed out, was promised in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The *Gita*, he mentioned, had been Gandhiji's constant companion; he had studied, expounded and lived it. Dr. Chhabra referred to Gandhiji's having made the acquaintance of the priceless little book in England, in his student years.

In *My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhiji described his introduction to the *Gita* by two brothers, students of Theosophy and pupils of Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, to whom they presented him. We may mention also that it was the reading of her *Key to Theosophy* which, he wrote :—

> stimulated in me the desire to read books on Hinduism, and disabused me of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition.

Perhaps his later quest for the truth in the universal basis of all religions stems from that brief contact.

Brahmacharya really means service of the great power of light, of truth, of purity that exists in the universe. Modern India can profit by Gandhiji's example in individual conduct as well as in taking all decisions from the point of view of the spiritual nature of man.

His attitude of spiritual compromise of the right kind seems, moreover, to give India a pattern for a type of Government different from that of conflicting parties. In the idea of a Round-Table Discussion, in which different views may be courteously presented and an amicable agreement reached, there may be something worth considering seriously. Clashes in the Indian Parliament between religious, provincial and linguistic interests weaken India's influence abroad. Shri Nehru, however, in weighing all proposals on their merits, regardless of their source, is following Gandhiji's example and giving a valuable lead in international relations.

The Indian Institute of Culture observed Raja Ram Mohan Roy Day on September 28th, when addresses were delivered by three speakers, Dr. D. Gurumurti, Shri P. R. Ramaiya and Professor Sampathgiri Rao, under the chairmanship of Shri B. P. Wadia. The composite picture which emerged of the great patriot of international sympathies, a religious, social and political reformer, fearless and sincere, was of a moral and intellectual giant.

A man of spiritual and mystical bent, he had worked against idolatry and founded the Brahmo Samaj "for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe." It had become a Hindu reform movement, but in his conception it was to be broader-based, offering a common platform to men of all creeds. He had studied the scriptures of Islam and the Bible, learning Hebrew and Greek to study the latter in the original, and said that he understood Vedanta the better for having done so.

An instructive parallel was drawn between him and Gandhiji, both deeply religious and practising what they preached, and both, from their religious convictions as a centre, leading the way to reforms in society, politics and economics. Ram Mohan Roy had attacked *suttee* and encouraged widow remarriage. He had worked for freedom of speech, opposing censorship of the press. In every direction his influence had been good, not least, it was mentioned, in the sphere of international relations, into which the spiral of India's history was taking her more and more today. Great patriot though

he was, he had recognized the value of English education for India and the contact that it offered with world thought. He deserved the appellation "Father of Modern India," the title of a volume published on the centenary of his death.

Comprendre, Revue de la Société Européenne de Culture, contains several human and enlightened contributions by writers of world-wide repute such as Charles Morgan, Stephen Spender, Lewis Mumford and M. Duverger. Prof. Umberto Campagnolo is truly an excellent editor. Outstanding among the articles in the issue of May 1954 is the essay by Ruth Nanda Anshen (known for her fine anthology on "Freedom") on "The Emergence of Universal Man." This echoes the message of the Renaissance *Oration on the Dignity of Man* by Pico della Mirandola and the ancient Eastern conception of *Nara*, the thinking man in search of a system of universal and eternal truths. Miss Anshen comes out with aphoristic flashes of sapience, *e.g.*:—

> Man must finally learn that the meaning of each individual existence rises above the socio-historical process and has a direct kinship with universal truth.
>
> Democracy cannot merely be; it must *do*. For without doing, it will cease to be.
>
> The highest justice is that which distributes to each in accordance with his own nature, permitting of course equal access to all the sources of economic wealth and spiritual fulfilment; a natural equality, a political justice which mankind requires if anarchy is to be avoided.
>
> Man must move quickly, for the universal brotherhood to which his philosophy and religion have summoned him has become the condition of his survival.

Miss Anshen properly pleads that the concept of the common man, *communis homo,* referred originally not to the

> amorphous, inarticulate, anonymous man, but to the immanent deity, the very *man* in every man.

Therefore she says, quoting Thomas Paine, " We have it within our power to begin the world over again."

It is, however, a very real pity that even Miss Anshen's article suffers from the besetting sin of many contemporary Western writers—subtle special pleading on behalf of Christianity. Statements such as

> Buddhism in emphasizing the sheer infinity of the divine principle robbed its practical influence of energetic, originative value and activity

regrettably reveal more glibness than knowledge. Surely, the supreme need of our time, in the East and the West alike, is for a deeper understanding and for less mutual denigration than we have had so far! On the whole, Miss Anshen probably realizes this in her inspired prevision of the social order that must come if human culture is not to crumble before the demands of the Atomic Age. This seems to be felt by two self-critical American contributors to *Comprendre,* Waldo Frank and Lewis Hanke. It is, however, only in Lewis Mumford's article on "The America in Europe" that the most significant key-note is struck:—

> For the Old World culture of Europe and Asia, and the New World culture of the Americas can survive only on the same terms that individual states and nations and cities can now survive—by the further creation of a One-World culture, which will enclose and reconcile, and yet transcend, all the existing energies, vitalities, humanities, and divinities. Here as elsewhere survival is bound up with continued growth and renewal.